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# RELIGION IN CHINESE GARMENT



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# RELIGION IN CHINESE GARMENT

by

KARL LUDVIG REICHELT

*Translated by*

JOSEPH TETLIE



LUTTERWORTH PRESS  
LONDON



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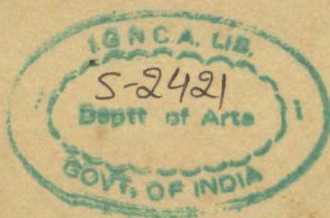


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First published 1951

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Billing and Sons Ltd., Guildford and Esher

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*Sunith Kumar (Hallerji)*  
*Calcutta / August 9, 1956.*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

No apology need be offered for the appearance of a book on the religions of China. Recent events have at least made a far larger number of people conscious of the Chinese in a new way. There are now many more who know enough about China's past to be interested in her future.

The story of the largest and oldest of the nations of the world should naturally command the attention of thoughtful people. Students have been increasingly impressed by the immense achievements there recorded, and strongly attracted by the brilliance and beauty of China's civilization.

While the Chinese are hardly characterized by the passionate absorption in the spiritual quest which is found in India, yet it has not been absent among them, and the development of religious thought and practice has largely entered into the very texture of Chinese life.

The author, Dr. Karl Ludvig Reichelt, is so well and favourably known as an authority on religions, and most of all the religions of China, that it is entirely unnecessary for me to say anything. I am only glad to have been of help in making this book available to a larger circle of readers.

As to the translation, I have sought to render accurately the meaning of the Norwegian text into reasonably idiomatic and readable English. But the author has an eloquence of expression, and a frequent beauty and richness of style that one could not hope to carry over without loss into another language.

JOSEPH TETLIE.



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## CHAPTER I

### ANIMISM AND ITS PHILOSOPHIC BACKGROUND

FROM the earliest times in China there has existed a common cult of spirits. A clear understanding of the Chinese spirit cult, and especially its peculiar philosophic background, really means the possession of a key which opens up and reveals the connection throughout.

As we shall see later, Chinese animism is easily distinguishable from the crude form commonly found among primitive peoples, and it is in its specifically Chinese form that it has produced fresh shoots right down to the present, and is still an important factor in the religious life of China.

#### THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE CHINESE AND ITS INFLUENCE

It is necessary first to deal briefly with the question of the original home of the Chinese people. It seems likely that they came from the West.

It is a familiar fact that there were people in the south and east of China before those now known as Chinese gained a foothold in those regions. Scattered through the provinces of Kweichow, Szechwan, Yünnan, Kwangtung and Kwangsi, as well as on the two large islands of Formosa and Hainan, is found a whole congeries of primitive inhabitants divided into a number of tribes: Lolos, Shans, Miaotze and others. They have their own language, and have preserved their characteristics down through the ages, so they are easily distinguished from the Chinese. Nevertheless, recent investigation has led to the conclusion that the language of the present Chinese, as well as that of these aborigines, both belong under one great language classification, that of Indo-Chinese, to which also belong the Thibetan, Burmese and Siamese languages.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMISM

Conditions were specially favourable in prehistoric China for the development of animism. There may have been in the first place a long period of nomadism, when they journeyed steadily eastward through the vast mountain and desert regions of Central Asia. Here, as never before, they encountered the



mighty powers of nature, and nature's terrors. They had immense mountain ranges and endless deserts to cross. Great snow expanses and glaciers, swift rivers and gloomy forests were obstacles in the way of both travel and thought. Wild beasts filled the nomad with fear, and some species now extinct, which in strength and ferocity surpassed anything which they had yet seen, agitated the mind and stimulated the imagination. Add to these things the many bloody encounters after their arrival in Chinese territory, and the continual attacks of the natives, and one need not wonder that the army of spirits as first described is chiefly a cruel, revengeful host of demons. It was not till later, when the possibly previously nomadic Chinese had arrived at settled life amid the smiling landscapes of Shansi, that the idea of beneficent spirits and their influence gained any prominence.

In the earliest period the development of thought was somewhat as follows. Evil spirits can clothe themselves with the forms of other entities. That is their supreme enjoyment. Hence they continually lie in wait for their victims, which may be animals, birds, fishes, or dead things. Some creatures are specially liable to demon possession, such as apes, foxes, tigers, dogs, goats, and serpents of all varieties. Many a time an angry ape or a raging tiger has inspired a whole district with helpless terror. Officials must then arrange for special sacrifices; exorcists have a busy time of it; and heads of clans gather for the most solemn deliberations. Hair-raising tales of periodic demon attacks are handed down from generation to generation and are held to be perfectly reliable.

But the demon spirits' most highly prized booty is the human being. From secret lairs in wood and field, by road and river, on sea and land, they make their attacks upon people, rendering them dazed and mentally incapacitated; or they strike them with insanity, or bring sickness and death upon them. In some places it is as if the evil spirits have gained the authority to destroy a certain number of people every year. How often one hears Chinese say, even today, that in that river, or on that street, just so many people will die in the course of the year.

As might be expected, disturbances in nature, so frequent in China, were connected with the work of evil spirits. These spirits have caused the mighty powers in earth and water, personified in the earth and water dragons, to break forth, causing terrible floods, droughts, or earthquakes. Thus the common expression for floods, *chu lung*, significantly means "to send forth the dragon."



## THE EVIL SPIRITS

In the continuous warfare with the demon forces man's best recourse is to the gods or good spirits (*shen*). These gods, of whom we shall hear more later, were from the very first connected with the outstanding natural forces: fire, thunder, storm, as well as with the fixed elements of existence. Later on there were added numberless other gods, as former great men and mysterious legendary figures were deified.

The important thing, then, was to establish contact with these gods. This was done through worship. A *cultus* soon developed, which in the beginning was very simple, bound up as it was with sacred places out in the open. The sanctuary was often nothing more than an open space enclosed by a wall, with a little stone altar in the centre. Roofed buildings gradually came into use, but it was a long time before the gods were objectified in figures of wood and stone.

The earliest traditions of ancient China indicate that there were certain individuals in the family or clan whose special duty it was to care for the worship. Afterwards there came to be a single class which, in addition to these family priests, conducted the service of worship. Our main source of knowledge concerning these matters is in the four ancient literary collections: (1) *Shu-ching*, the Book of History; (2) *Shi-ching*, the Book of Odes; (3) *Yi-ching*, the Book of Changes; and (4) *Li-chi*, the Book of Ceremonies. Of these it is the *Yi-ching* especially which is of the greatest importance for our subject.

The *Yi-ching's* profound philosophical conception of cosmic evolution is briefly outlined in the Third Appendix of the book, paragraph 70. These Appendixes, as the term indicates, are later additions. A number of scholars hold that they were not added to the original writing before the Christian era. This view may be correct. But this does not signify that the cosmic view presented in the Third Appendix appeared so late and is not shared by the book itself. On the contrary, a careful study of the Book of History (*Shu-ching*), the Book of Changes (*Yi-ching*), and the Odes (*Shi-ching*) gives the definite impression that the *Pa-kwa*, the basis for China's cosmogony, forms the background for the poetical expressions in the Odes as well as for the remarkable and lofty philosophy of the sixty-four categories of changes. It is quite a different matter to say that this philosophical scheme in its complete development took a long time for its final systematization. This was done, as we shall see later, under the Sung philosopher Chow Tun-i in the eleventh century A.D.

Having thus briefly sketched animism in its primitive form, we shall proceed to consider the philosophical explanation which the Chinese developed for this their first religion.

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEW

From eternity there exists an absolute point (*tai-chi*). It is the topmost point, or the point of beginning. In our modern speech it might be called the "primordial cell". This absolute point of departure contains within itself two elements (principles) which, like *tai-chi* itself, are from eternity (dualism). The one principle is called *Yang*, and in the graphic representation is set forth in red or some light colour. *Yang* is the principle of light, warmth, steadfastness, goodness. (*Yang*—clear, warm; the sun; the male element). The second principle, *Ying*, is represented by a dark colour. *Ying* is the principle of darkness, cold, changeable, and evil. (*Ying*—cloudy, dim, dark, cold; the female element.) As heaven is thought of as the place of the steadfast and the good, the source of light, *Yang* becomes also an expression for heaven (*tien* or *chien*). *Ying* becomes in the same way a term for the earth (*ti* or *kwen*), the place of changeableness and evil. Furthermore, as heaven is looked upon as the fructifying male power, in that it sends sunshine and rain upon the earth, *Yang* comes to designate man or the male, and *Ying* similarly woman or the female. The two elements, *Yang* and *Ying*, form as they embrace one another the familiar spherical figure denoting *tai-chi*, or the ultimate absolute, as in the illustration here given.



This graphic representation of *tai-chi* is found everywhere in China as a decoration on gates and houses, on exorcists' banners, and engraved on household utensils.

Out of this idea of *tai-chi* is developed everything which is included in the conception of creation. Matter is produced in an unbroken process, and assumes form according to the laws

inherent in the being of *Yang* and *Ying*. Matter is formed by the *Yang* and *Ying* forces working together, or rather in opposition. For there is between them an eternal tension, due to their diametrically opposed character. Out of this mighty tension (alternate action) come fog and dust. These condense into solid, dead, unformed matter called *tso-chi*. Life and order make their appearance when there is sent from heaven, the source of the *Yang* forces, a pure, life-giving air current, *ching-chi*.

Out of this substance, now containing in itself the seed of life by virtue of heaven's *ching-chi*, the first living being sprang forth. This being is called P'an-Ku. There has always been some confusion among the Chinese regarding this first lonely figure. Shall he be looked upon as incarnate god (demi-god), or as the first man (Adam)? The majority regard him as the primeval man, the first human being.

In the brief myth about P'an Ku he is said to have lived and laboured for 18,000 years. His whole activity is laconically set forth in the sentence: *P'an-Ku kai tien* ("P'an-Ku opened the heavens"). That is, P'an-Ku separated the elements—water, earth, mountains, etc. The work of civilization on earth begins with him. He is accordingly often portrayed by the Chinese as a giant figure, who with chisel in one hand and mallet in the other is engaged in cleaving the rocks. It should, however, be remarked that the expression referred to is not found in any of the ancient classical writings. But Chinese scholars are of the opinion that it is based upon a very ancient oral tradition. The expression is found in a number of religious and popular writings, none of which is older than *circa* 1200 A.D. (One of these is *Shuh-I-ch'i*—Accounts of Remarkable Traditions; another is the popular *Kan Lioh To Chu*, where Adam and Eve are also mentioned.)

After him, according to the oldest mythological traditions, there followed three equally mysterious persons whose activities covered a similarly long period of time. These were: the "Emperor of Heaven" (*Tien-fang*), the "Emperor of Earth" (*Ti-fang*), and the "Emperor of Men" (*Jen-fang*). The result of their labours was that the earth became habitable for man. The next "emperor" mentioned bears the name *Yu-ch'ao* ("Nest-dweller"). He taught men to build houses. Before his time they had lived in caves in the earth or in the rocks. *Yu-ch'ao* was followed by *Sui Jen*, the Chinese Prometheus, who taught men the use of fire. A capable "empress" is also mentioned, *Tienhau* by name. She is worshipped as the patron goddess of merchants and sailors.

Thus far it is pure mythology. What follows used to be



generally called the legendary period. From this we shall also glean a few items of importance for our subject.

### LEGENDARY PERIOD

The legendary period begins with the great chieftain (emperor Fu-shi). He is said to have lived 2852 B.C. According to Chinese reckoning the historical period begins with him. But it is not yet history in the modern sense. Dependable history writing hardly goes back beyond the later years of the Chou dynasty, *circa* 722 B.C. During this period China doubtless had great statesmen and profound thinkers, but the historical features are overgrown with a network of myths and metaphysical speculations, so that the materials to be gathered here are more useful for the history of religions than for general history.

In line with the idea that real history had its beginning with Fu-shi Chinese hold that previous to him there lies a period of at least 500,000 years. That is the time that intervened between the formation of the earth and the beginning of the history of the "Middle Kingdom" in China. As we have had occasion to notice, the different periods are connected with the names of great men and emperors. "Emperors" are, of course, great chieftains. Fu-shi is said to have taught the people to fish with nets, to raise cattle, and to play on the flute and the lyre. It is also claimed for him that he instituted laws concerning marriage, and, greatest of all, that he invented writing. In connection with this it may be remarked that, even though it is not unthinkable that the earliest attempts at pictorial writing may have been made about this time, it has been amply demonstrated that actual Chinese writing originated at a considerably later date.

Fu-shi was followed by Shen-nung (2757 B.C.). He taught men to till the soil, and gave instruction about medicinal herbs. On that account he is to this day revered as the father of Chinese medicine. He is frequently pictured as an old man who is internally illuminated by lighted tapers.

Two centuries after the Emperor Huang-ti, the father of the calendar, had done his work we hear that the imperial honours were borne successively by the celebrated trio, Yao, Shun and Yü (2356-3205). These emperors, who have far more semblance of historicity than any of those before them, occupy the period which constitutes China's ancient golden age. For Confucius these three incarnated the imperial ideal, and he is never weary of describing their unselfish and beneficent labours for country.

and people. The result of these labours was that the people lived in peace and happiness, and morals were on so high a plane that "one need not lock the door at night", and "every lost object was left where it was till the owner came for it". It is remarkable, too, to read about these emperors' deep piety. *Shu-ching* (Book of History) states clearly that they worshipped and sacrificed to *Shang-ti* (the supreme god), to "the six objects of highest veneration", to the mountains and rivers, and to the ancestral spirits.

This would seem to be a proper place to point out some of the passages in China's classical literature which deal with *Shang-ti* and *Tien* (Heaven). One of the most important of these is the passage already mentioned, in *Shu-ching*, c. II, i, 6, where it is related of Shun, who, with the observance of all the prescribed ceremonies, took over the regency after Yao, that "he offered a special sacrifice (*lei*) to *Shang-ti* with the usual ceremonies. He sacrificed in the proper way to the mountains and rivers, and offered his homage to the hundred spirits". Since this is the earliest mention of sacrifice in the *Shu-ching* in its present form it will be appreciated that the passage is of the utmost importance. From the juxtaposition in this quotation it seems clear that *Shang-ti* cannot be identified with the nature spirits, even the most powerful of them. He stands forth quite independently as the sovereign Maker and primordial Ruler.

In *Shu-ching*, c. II, iv, 2, we read: "If the Emperor will carefully observe the basis of things and the revered silence he shall clearly receive *Shang-ti*". And immediately after it this statement: "Heaven will renew its mandate and bless you!" Here "Heaven" is clearly used as the equivalent of *Shang-ti*, something which can be proved from passage after passage out of these ancient writings. The first time that *Tien* appears as a metaphysical and divine conception is in *Shu-ching*, c. II, iii, 5-7: Kao-yao, Emperor Shun's minister of justice, makes this statement: "This is an act of Heaven." In one of the later chapters of *Shu-ching*, which deals with *Shang-ti*'s giving of the mandate, cf. "I dare not oppose Heaven's command", c. V, vii, 3-4. In *Shi-ching* (Book of Odes) *Tien* is mostly used. Not before we come to its second part (*Hsia-ya*) do we find *Shang-ti*; as in c. II, iv, 4, 8: "Great *Shang-ti*, does he hate anyone?" In *Yi-ching* (Book of Changes) *Tien* is used of that which is established by law. But here also is found the abbreviated form for *Shang-ti*, which is *Ti*. Cf. c. II, 42, 2: "If the king sacrifices at this time to *Ti* it is very good." In Appendix II, i, 16: "The wise men cooked (sacrificed) as they sacrificed to *Shang-ti*." In *Li-chi* (Book of Ceremonies) *Tien* and *Shang-ti*

occur according to well-defined usage. If God is the object of sacrifice he is designated as *Ti*, or (using the first syllable of *Shang-ti*) *Shang*. On the other hand, if the idea of source or the establishment of law is to be emphasized, *Tien* is used. Cf. c. VIII, ii, 12: "They sacrificed to *Ti* at a sacred place and in a worthy manner." And in c. III, ii, 17 and 21: "The Son of Heaven made the special sacrifice to *Ti*."

Those who really seek to gain an insight into these oldest Chinese writings cannot doubt that in these expressions, *Shang-ti* and *Tien*, the Chinese have an unusually adequate terminology, in which the majestic conception of deity, which Western thought puts into the term God (capitalized) can be expressed, and that, too, whether the old classical word *Shang-ti* is used, or one chooses with the Catholics to add a *Chu* (Lord) to *Tien*, in order to emphasize the idea of personality *Tien-chu* (Heavenly Lord). In comparison herewith we should be poor indeed if obliged to confine ourselves to the collective god concept *shen*, which, as we have already seen, is just as much a term for the good spirits and the heavenly rulers, as it is an expression denoting the highest realities in mankind's spiritual experience (the *yang* forces).

We cannot enter upon a detailed discussion of the historical background, nor dwell more fully upon the remarkable cultural development going on in this region of the Far East at the dawn of history. But we must have been struck by the fact of the activity of great statesmen and noteworthy intellects long before the time of Laotze and Confucius, and the unusually high degree of receptivity which the people themselves show for culture and high thinking. In what follows we shall see how crude animism, as it is absorbed into the deeper thinking of the people, becomes firmly established in its characteristic form.

#### THE PLACE OF ANIMISTIC THINKING

Thinking of the world in terms of this dualistic principle of *Yang* and *Ying*, the conclusion was reached before very long that the good spirits, or "gods", were but personified *Yang* forces, and the evil spirits, or "demons", in like manner personified *Ying* forces.

The personified *Yang* forces were termed *shen*. This word is usually translated "good spirit" or "god". There are immense numbers of these "good spirits", and they carry on a universally beneficent activity in their energetic warfare with the widely ramifying *Ying* system.

The personified *Ying* forces are called *kwei*, generally ren-



dered "evil spirit" or "demon" (devil). These demons are, if possible, even more numerous than the good spirits. Everywhere their demoralizing and destructive influence may be seen. But both sorts of spirits, both the good and the bad, are alike essential in the mighty eternal harmony of existence. It should be noted, however, that the word *kwei* in ancient times was also used indifferently, and often of a person's good genius. Classical literature offers many examples of such usage. But gradually the use of the term was carried over entirely into the category of demons.

### MAN'S "SHEN" AND "KWEI"

We have already pointed out that man also is a product of the interaction of *Yang* and *Ying* forces. In other words, man is partly *Yang* and partly *Ying*. The most ancient traditions confirm this thought when they speak of one's god (*shen*) and of one's demon (*kwei*). Other terms are later substituted for *shen* and *kwei* when speaking of the constituent elements of man. *Shen* becomes *huen* (the superior substance), and *kwei* is changed to *poh* (the inferior substance), also pronounced *pai*. Chinese thought has even been able to discover the proportion of higher and lower substance in the human soul. Here as elsewhere the reckoning is in decimals. There is a well-known old saying: "Man has three souls and seven lower parts."

This composite human soul, frequently called from the nobler part *ling-huen*, has taken up its residence in a body formed of earth—*shenti*, or still more significantly, *tü-koh*. The body, which in itself is dead (*ai*), in that it is a product of *tso-chi* (solidified dust and fog), comes to life when the soul (*ling-huen*) takes up its residence in it.

Death occurs when the three soul parts return to heaven, the source of the *Yang* forces, provided that some demon or other has not seized upon them and carried them off to the regions of gloom. Under ordinary circumstances one of the soul parts remains for a time near the bier of the dead, and afterward in the vicinity of the grave. It is the seven *Ying* parts (*Shi-pai*), however, which maintain the longest connection with the dead body. But these must also depart as decomposition sets in.

The advent of illness is a sign that the person is having a soul element torn from him. If the illness grows worse one may be certain that a part of the soul has already left the sick person. It is then explained that a demon has found opportunity to make away with something of the soul. The important thing then is by means of exorcism, persuasion or threats to bring the demon to release his prey.

## EXORCISM

This conception of sickness and death has formed the basis for the arrangements carried out by relatives in such cases, as well as for the practice of exorcists. From very ancient times the practice of recalling the soul (*chao-huen*) is found in China, in cases where sickness or insanity has led to unconsciousness or death. Some piece of wearing apparel frequently used by the person in question, usually a jacket, is taken to the house top, and with face toward the north the garment is held out or swung around three times, each time calling the name of the person (three long pleading cries): "——— come back! ———! ———!" It is heartrending to hear the bitter cries of mothers in the stillness of the night when their little ones are sick. A mother may stand there for hours calling the child's name, in order to bring the departed soul element back. It is also a moving sight to see the father's, grandfather's, or the brothers' earnest worship before the ancestral tablet, in temple or ancestral hall, while one near and dear to them lies at the point of death.

But they place their greatest confidence in the professional exorcists. A fire is lighted outside the door, and these take their place before a temporary altar, usually arrayed in the robes of their office. They are surrounded with lighted candles and numbers of long scrolls of painted figures having demon-compelling powers. They intone the long magic formulas from the Book of Odes (with late additions). At certain intervals there is a clash of music, often accompanied by wild rolls on drums.

We find a remnant of the most ancient class of exorcists in the so-called *shī-kung-sī*, who have been able to maintain their position till the present time. Of late the ranks of the exorcists have been recruited from the Vegetarian Sect (*tsai-kung*), and also from Taoist circles (*tao-sī*).

There is another class of men called *tao-jen*, with their female counterpart, *tao-nü*, having mainly a Buddhist background, but also making use of features from the golden age of classical animism, and from Taoism. One must not be deceived by the name into thinking them pure Taoists. These people are usually called in to the sick. The Buddhist priests, on the other hand, have almost completely monopolized the still more difficult task of making the necessary arrangements in the other world for the disintegrated man—the dead. Of this we shall have more to say.

Together with the above-mentioned *shī-kung-sī* appears another class of exorcists who, through the worship of local divinities of a lower moral order (at times even demons) are

brought into a condition of ecstasy. In this state they achieve superhuman power, as they are thought to be possessed by the divinity's spirit. It is especially young, highstrung boys, whose nervous and emotional organization is easily affected, who are used in this sinister and repellent traffic. They are called *tsiang-t'ung-tze*—i.e., "possessed boys".

Some of these scenes are among the most unpleasant things one sees in China. The one "possessed" dashes about like an insane person, striking at the supposed demons with his sword (often formed of coins). Foaming at the mouth, he shouts out curses or inarticulate speech. He climbs up the wall timbers, races around the yard, leaps upon the roof, until he has finally forced the much-feared demon spirits into a half-open box. Having got them there, he "binds" them with a formula, and seals the box with red cord or paper bands. The box is then thrown into the flames. His task is ended, and he may then be led into the main room, where the temporary altar has been constructed, and where candles and incense are burning. Here he covers his face; cold water is sprinkled on him, and he gradually recovers consciousness.

In some of the coast provinces, and in Anhui, a particular class of *tao-nü* (female Taoists) have a special function. They are also called *tao-ja-chung*—"those who draw worms out of the teeth". They claim to be able to establish connections between the living and the dead, and also between men and gods or demons. Naturally these "mediums" are much sought. They carry a wooden doll. By a magic formula this doll is sent to hades, after which it begins to speak from the bosom of the sorceress (where it is concealed), often in deep ventriloquistic tones, and brings its message from the other world. The whole thing is a complicated mixture of tricks and ventriloquism, etc.

In connection with these wooden dolls it ought to be mentioned that these, as well as paper dolls, play an important part in ceremonies of cursing and revenge. A doll in male or female form, resembling the object as nearly as possible, is set up. In the stillness of an obscure temple, before some poor image, the doll is insulted, cursed and spat upon, after which it is dismembered and buried or thrown into the water.

#### THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

An immortality of the soul, or, more properly, of the spirit, has been taken for granted by many Chinese from the earliest times. This belief has maintained itself almost unimpaired, in



spite of the disintegrating influence of the speculations of more recent times.

Not least on this account, death always inspired a certain terror, both for the one departing and for those left behind. For it was thought to be certain that the one who died would either take his place among the good spirits, or he would become an evil spirit. In the former case the spirit of the departed would work for the blessing and protection of the living kin, besides itself enjoying a satisfying existence; in the latter event the dead would become a revengeful and enticing demon spirit, as an evil fate always threatening its living relatives, and mankind in general, and at the same time itself be condemned to an unquiet existence in unbroken darkness.

The question whether the dead should continue existence as a good spirit or as a demon depended primarily upon his own moral condition. But the relationship maintained by his kindred was no less important. If these observed the obligations of filial piety, through worship, exorcism and continual sacrifices doing everything possible to guide the spirit along the right paths, there were good hopes that the desired result might be achieved.

It is evident that here is the basis of that ancestral cult which is well known in China from the most ancient times. Accordingly there was a very early development of a highly complicated ceremonial regarding the style of funeral apparel, the casket's quality and measure, the funeral rites, and the period of mourning. In the meantime, since ancestor worship is to be treated in a separate chapter, we shall not enter upon a fuller discussion of it at this point.

Resurrection of the body is never mentioned in the thought systems existing from China's ancient period. Nevertheless, a feeling and a dim intimation in that direction may possibly be seen in the arrangements made for the grave, which are detailed and painstaking to the highest degree; and also in the no less careful arrangements made by the living to secure the body of the dead as long as possible from decay.

#### FATE CATEGORIES

Among the ancient literary collections of China, already mentioned, *Yi-ching*, the Book of Changes, occupies a special position. It is based altogether upon the peculiar system of thought which finds its point of departure in *taichi*, but at the same time boldly carries the development further. The book has been traditionally attributed to a certain King Wang, who is said to have lived *circa* 1142 B.C., and to his son, the Duke of Chow.

But most of the materials had long lain ready to hand. For example, the eight well-known diagrams (*Pa-kwa*) are said to have been worked out by the above-mentioned Emperor Fu-shi (2852 B.C.). Many rulers and scholars have made additions and written commentaries on the book down through the ages. It has been so highly esteemed that no major enterprise was undertaken without first consulting this book. There is a well-known statement attributed to Confucius in his old age: "If a period of years might still be added to my life, I would devote fifty of them to the study of *Yi-ching*, for I know that I should not then go astray."

The philosophic basis of the book may be briefly set forth as follows: When the figure *taichi* is analysed into its elements *Yang* and *Ying*, the following figure is obtained: ——— and ———, called *liang yi*, the two categories. The unbroken line is *Yang*, which, it will be remembered, is always the principle of stability. The broken line is *Ying*, which is fundamentally the infirm, the broken. When these are placed together, each with itself and each with the other, there results a four-part diagram:



In this were seen the four chief illustrations which most clearly expressed the four seasons, wherefore this group was called *sî-siang* (the four seasons). If the *Yang* and *Ying* lines are placed over the *sî-siang* in every possible horizontal position, the result is Fu-shi's eight trigrams (*pa-kwa*):



In these eight fate-trigrams the classical world-view of the Chinese is compressed into one glowing focal point. The first of the eight figures is seen to be made up of only *Yang* lines. It is therefore an expression for heaven, as well as for the light, the unchangeable and the good in the world. This figure is accordingly represented by the character *chien*, so highly valued by the Chinese, which together with *fu*, the character for happiness, is often placed above gates and entrances.

The last figure in the series is made up altogether of *Ying* lines. It thus comes to represent the earth (*kwen*), the changeable, the dark and the evil in the world.

Between these two lie the six mixed categories, each of which

alludes to the powers of nature, the state of the weather, and the changing destiny.

Long afterward the philosopher Chow Tun-i gained fame by placing the phrase "without upper limit" before *taichi*, signifying that beyond the visible lies the invisible. Chow Tun-i lived about 1050 A.D. under the Sung Dynasty. He wrote a book which to this day is highly esteemed, not least in Taoist circles. This book, whose title is *Taichi Tou Shoh* (*Statements Concerning the Primordial Cell*), gives the best existing summary of Chinese cosmogony.

The following statement has developed from Chow's view: "The Ultra-Ultimate Absolute gave birth to the Ultimate Absolute. The Ultimate Absolute gave birth to the Two Categories; the Two Categories to the Four Pictures; the Four Pictures to the Eight Categories of Fate. The Eight Categories determine happiness and misfortune; happiness and misfortune beget the great epochs."

But they did not stop here. Eight categories for the shifting play of destiny in the world was too little. *Pakwa* was very early enlarged from a trigram to a hexagram, with six parallel *Yang* and *Ying* lines in every possible relation. Thus the famous sixty-four categories of the Book of Change came into being. A chapter was written on each figure, full of mystical allusions to the play of destiny on human life. The book has accordingly become the great source for all later prophecy and fantastic calculation. The whole system, then, may be graphically represented as below:

1. The Analyzed *Taichi*.

2. The Four Fundamental Representations, or Seasons (*sī-siang*).

3. The Eight Great Categories of Fate (*pa kwa*).







### FORTUNE-TELLING AND ITS RELATION TO THE CATEGORIES

We have already intimated that these old, mysterious calculations quite naturally became the basis of that system of soothsaying which is so highly developed in China. The Book of Changes became for all practical purposes the Bible for soothsayers, both professional and amateur. And the fact that they can refer to such generally acknowledged documents makes it possible for these people, otherwise very lightly esteemed, to have some influence in society. The ranks of soothsayers get their recruits chiefly from among scholars who have failed in their own line, or among those of the middle class who have gained some proficiency in reading and writing. It is a matter of importance that they shall have received their instruction in the art from some well-known practitioner.

The soothsaying process itself is quite complicated, and varies a good deal in different places throughout the country. The majority go by an old codex, called *Suen-tseh-pi-yao* ("Selected Formulas"). In visiting the professional soothsayers, who sit at their open tables along the street, one sees their "shingles", which indicate the various "schools" of soothsaying. The most common are the *Wen Wang Ko* (School of *Wen Wang*), *Li Ko* (School of *Li-Hsü-chong*), and *Sü Ko* (School of *Sü Yen sheng*).

The patron saint of the first-mentioned is old *Wen Wang* (King Wen), who is supposed to have expanded Fu-shi's eight categories to sixty-four. These "professors" use coins as dice, wherefore this system is often called *ch'ien po* (throwing coins to learn the play of destiny). The face of the coin bearing the inscription is counted as the upper side, and represents the *Yang* principle, denoting happiness and prosperity; while the other is the lower, or *Ying* side, denoting misfortune and loss.

The coins are thrown on the table, after having been gathered in a turtle shell and shaken once or twice. One of the four following results is anticipated: (1) The three coins fall with upper side up. This is called *Kiao*, and means happiness and good fortune. (2) The three coins fall with lower side up, which is called *Chung*, and signifies misfortune and ill-luck. (3) Two fall with the upper, and one with the lower side up, called *Tan*, and explained as moderately good fortune. (4) Two show the lower, and one the upper side. This is termed *Tseh*, and is understood to be a bad omen.

The experiment is repeated six times, and the results are tabulated as follows:

A fairly good cast is put down as *Yang* (———).

A rather poor cast goes as *Ying* (—— ———).

A good cast changes *Ying* to *Yang* (—— ——— ———).

A poor cast changes *Yang* to *Ying* (—— ——— ———).

Each of these results is then applied to the corresponding category in Fu-shi's trigrams in the Book of Changes. Here the main lines are laid out for the course of destiny, and what may be lacking in detail is eloquently supplied by the soothsayer out of the "depths of his wisdom"!

The second school, *Li Ko*, uses six characters, which the applicant hands the "professor" as he comes up to the table. The third school, *Sü Ko*, has added two characters to the six, making the *pah-tze* (eight characters) which are so famous in China. Otherwise there is no essential difference. The six, or the eight, characters are used to give the time of birth—year, month and day, and, in *Sü Ko*, the hour.

The following process is then used: The soothsayer has written on his tablet the five characters for the "Five Elements": wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. With these characters are paired the ten characters representing the heavenly families, and the twelve characters for the earthly branches. In the next column are added the cycle characters referring to the six antagonistic animal species (horse and cow, rat and goat, dog and rooster, tiger and serpent, dragon and hare, monkey and pig). The above-mentioned five elements are supposed to produce or destroy each other, respectively. Thus water produces wood; wood produces heat; heat produces earth; earth, metal; metal, water. On the other hand, wood is destroyed by metal, earth by wood, water by earth, fire by water, and metal by fire.

The client's eight characters are now compared with the columns of characters in such a way that it may be seen at once whether they fit in—i.e., whether the results will be productive.

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(and therefore fortunate), or destructive (ill-omened). All who have studied Chinese know that the characters for the five elements are also used as radicals, or roots, and are therefore constituent parts of a great many characters (words). In the other paired characters there are also many "disintegrating elements". It may therefore be taken for granted that the applicant's eight characters will have a purgatorial fire to go through when they are added. And the results are awaited with great suspense, as the "professor" goes on with his sifting process, now crossing out antagonistic characters with his brush, now combining them as fine products.

We shall later see how even many of the temples (Buddhist and Taoist) have caught the contagion of this sinister fortune-telling traffic. The throwing of a kind of dice (one convex and the other concave—*Ying-kwa* and *Yang-kwa*) is the favourite method. The proceedings are often preceded by an act of worship before an image (*Tâ Kwá*). A bamboo cylinder is often used, containing as many as a hundred bamboo sticks, with writing on them, and numbered. The numbers refer to numbers in the book of fortune. In kneeling position a stick is shaken from the container. The practitioner then rises and goes to the desk, where the result is made known. A strip of paper containing writing and correspondingly numbered may also be given.

The worst of all is when the applicant in that way "draws straws" to determine what kind of medicine he shall take to a sick and suffering patient at home. It can be imagined that he might bring medicine which did not altogether fit the case!

The blind fortune-tellers form a class by themselves. It is the one main livelihood open to the blind if they are not to take to begging, which is also very common. With the tenacious memory characteristic of the blind, they memorize the numerous formulas and calculations by the use of which conclusions can be drawn regarding the good or ill-fortune in the individual cases. Like their colleagues who have the use of their eyes, they sit at their little tables in open places, on bridges, or at street corners. Or they walk about, led by little children, among the streets and houses, constantly ringing a bell or playing a fiddle.

There are several classes of fortune-tellers. In the first class are the real soothsayers (*suan ming*, *suan pa-tse*). Then there are the diviners (*kan er'-tse*), face-readers (*kan-siang*), and finally the *feng-shui* experts, most highly esteemed of all. The same person will often practise in all these branches.

The *feng-shui* expert enjoys the highest standing because he is thought to understand the various kinds of soil, as well as the laws of wind and water (hence the name: *feng*-wind; *shui*-

water). They can interpret the lay of the dragon, and the lines in earth and mountain, air and sea. No house is built without first consulting such a one, to determine whether the planned location is fortunate. With his earth compass, criss-crossed with lines taken from the categories already described, he walks about, examining directions, environment, soil, surface characteristics of the terrain, etc. If he has an all-round training he can also determine which day is fortunate for starting the work. Otherwise a special diviner is brought in. After having in this way secured themselves against unpropitious time and unsafe place (*tao-tien, san-sha*), they confidently proceed with their building.

So likewise with all major events: marriages, funerals, beginning of business enterprises, opening of stores, etc.—all is directed by the sinister influence of the fortune-teller.

Quite often these fortune-tellers' calculations are tied up with the most gruesome demon incantations. The common folk have an intuitive feeling that the whole business is bound up with the demons, and so with all the evil spirit powers. Many of the Chinese proverbs and sayings bear witness to this. It is significant, too, that the whole tendency is characterized by the term that comes nearest to our witchcraft (*hsin iu shü*).

#### THE REGULATING FORCE—TAO

Is there then nothing which limits and regulates this eternal dualistic warfare between *Yang* and *Ying*? Yes, there is. And here we come to something of the deepest and finest in Chinese thought.

From the beginning when *Taichi*, the primordial cell, began to divide into the two fundamentally different elements, *Yang* and *Ying*, the independent, universal law of life, *Tao*, also began to operate.

*Tao* is an intensely vital concept. The word means literally "way"; then "order", "rule", and "the word" as expressing the heart's innermost thought and plan. Since the conception is always of a wise order, *Tao* comes to be another term for "law". As the term is used in its all-inclusive sense, the meaning of *Tao* comes nearest to being the same as "universal law", or "law of life".

*Tao* therefore comes to have a remarkable correspondence with the well-known *Logos* concept of the Stoics, which was later Christianized, and thereby became one of the richest words known to human speech. In the Chinese translation of the Bible *Logos* is accordingly rendered *Tao*, a fact that has helped to make the Gospel of John specially loved by the Chinese Church.

The Book of Odes, Book of History and the Book of Changes all use the term *Tao*, and always of the good, corrective power in the world. Through the mediating and corrective activity of *Tao*, nature's two eternal forces, which according to their essence are opposed to one another, must nevertheless work together, and at last result in harmony.

The above-named books from China's ancient period represent *Tao* as the immaterial and impersonal, which is in being eternal, but which in practical life begins its activity with the first inner tension and outward division of *Taichi*. *Tao* is the law of life which forms the great corrective element in the world's mechanism; it is the universal law for the whole evolutionary process, beginning with *Taichi* and continuing through the endless æons. We shall later have opportunity to see how this concept develops, and how the finest products of Chinese thought here find their inspiration.

#### THE RELATION OF "TAO" TO HEAVEN AND "SHANG-TI"

Quite early we find the thought expressed that "Heaven" (*tien*) works through *Tao*. We have previously noted that "Heaven" was conceived as personal, in that the first and best emperors placed the concept alongside that of the supreme god, *Shang-ti*. This signifies that *Tao* is conceived as the instrument of *Shang-ti's* activity in the world.

On the other hand, it is evident from China's ancient classical writings that the spirits, or gods in the wider sense (*shen*) are subordinate to *Tao*. One finds the remarkable statement in both *Shu-ching* and *Yi-ching* that no demon power can harm mankind without Heaven's permission. In other words, all sin brings its own punishment. Heaven, through the sure action and unimpeachable justice of its *Tao*, secures that no one may escape such consequence. Similarly, every good deed has its reward. This also Heaven provides through the same *Tao*.

From the earliest times in China there are sayings setting forth this fundamental relationship—e.g., "Good is rewarded with good, and evil is recompensed with evil. If retribution does not come at once, it is because the time has not yet come." *Shu-ching* has this statement: "Through *Tao* Heaven bestows happiness upon the good, and misfortune upon the evil."

#### THE PLACE OF "TAO" IN WORSHIP

In the constant warfare of the Chinese with evil spirits (*kwei*), they dimly perceived from the earliest times that the foremost



necessity was to be in harmony with *Tao*, the law of life. This thought, which was later developed in detail by Confucius and Laotze, appears in a preparatory way throughout the ancient philosophical system. But, since it is so difficult to bring human nature under the laws of life, and sin and weakness therefore appeared, it came in practice to be only through worship of the gods that victory over the demon hosts might be hoped for.

*Tao* itself could not be worshipped. Being impersonal, it is unapproachable, and not to be influenced by prayer and sacrifice. *Tien* and *Shangti*, on the other hand, were always conceived as personal; and so with the lesser divinities, who, in part, even had a background of human life.

A common characteristic of the real gods is that they always act, mediate and assist in accordance with *Tao*. Where there is guilt the element of atonement always comes in. So we hear of bloody sacrifices and burnt offerings from ancient times. The gods, who receive the sacrifice, then arrange everything in harmony with the nature of *Tao*. There is no ambiguity about the dealings of these gods, for it is precisely because they are in harmony with the law of life that they have their power over the demon spirits. In this connection the Chinese have formulated many fine sayings—e.g.: "Demon power cannot withstand the right" (*shie po ti chen*).

#### DEVIL WORSHIP

Officially the Chinese will seldom admit that pure devil worship occurs in China. And yet it is a fact that this kind of worship is practised. The reason is not far to seek. In this vast sea of humanity there are naturally many individuals who in a shocking degree have surrendered themselves to the power of evil, and whose occupation is robbery, murder, kidnapping, arson, and every imaginable crime. On account of their way of life they are strictly condemned by public opinion, and do not dare to present their prayers for help in forwarding their sinister plans openly and before the altars of the gods. What then? In the darkness of night, or in the early dawn they go to those demi-gods of doubtful character which are found in the corners of some of the temples, or in some out-of-the-way place, and at their altars present their prayers, their curses upon enemies, and their horrific oaths. An outright agreement is often made with some kwei-shen (god-demon). The individual will then sometimes lose himself so completely in his worship that it results in trance, or even madness. In this condition he has courage and strength to do the most terrible things.

Almost all secret societies in China have a religious background, and a number of them have descended to such a sinister relationship as that sketched above. One of the best known is *I-ho-tuan*—"The Society of Righteous Peace Fists", commonly called "Boxers"—which through its religious rites gained such wide prevalence and power before the year 1900. The members of such secret societies often bind each other by means of a sacramental sacrifice. A rooster is killed and the blood consumed (blood covenant) before the altar of the demon; or the contract may be written with blood-red characters.

Besides these there are also many innocent organizations. It is quite common for younger or older persons to form groups of four or eight for the purpose of protecting and furthering their common interests. This is what is called *pai ti-hsiung* (to worship brothers); often also *pai pa-tze ti-hsiung* (worship brothers of the eight characters). The one who can take up the largest quantity of earth in the hollow of his hand is *ko-ko* or *lao-tou* (eldest brother).

#### THE DRAGON

Under this chapter, which deals with the original religion of China, we must also briefly mention dragon worship. 'What is the Chinese dragon? It is a very difficult question to answer adequately. But the main part of the answer is given by saying that the dragon is the genius of the air, of the water, and of the mountains, personified in a variety of serpent-like monsters that hide themselves in all sorts of places. Upon their quietly remaining in their element depends the well being of the earth, as well as the regularity of the seasons, the normal quantity of rainfall, the proper movements of the winds, and so the harmony of existence. But if they are disturbed by unwise intrusion in their respective elements—by digging, or the building of high towers or houses in the wrong places, etc.—the most terrible disturbances in nature are the result. Only those who have carefully studied the laws of *feng-shui* (wind-water) can prevent such calamities. Therefore it is always necessary to turn to the "professors" of *feng-shui* before proceeding to change any point on the earth's surface.

The dragon (*lung*) is accordingly not connected with either good or evil as such. It is the personification of the regularity of nature, and nature's untamable power. Quite naturally, therefore, the imperial house in China has always chosen to call the throne the "dragon throne". One can also understand why Confucius, after his first meeting with Laotze, compared him to the dragon.

Dragon worship is connected with special holidays. First and foremost comes the Chinese New Year, and the following Lantern Festival, the 15th of the first moon. The districts in city or countryside organize themselves, each with a giant paper or cloth dragon. The figure is distended by means of sticks and rods, and lights are placed in the open mouth, giving a frightful aspect to the whole. The figure is carried through the streets to the sound of music and the beating of drums. The bearers move from side to side, thus imparting a swaying motion to the dragon (*Sua lung-t'eng*). In long curves the noisy, shouting procession enters the houses. It is a welcome guest. It is with the greatest satisfaction that those living in the house see it make its way from room to room, for where the dragon has made its New Year's visit all misfortune and devilry are banished for a long time. Great volleys of firecrackers are fired, and enthusiasm runs high.

The second great festival connected with the dragon is the Fifth Moon Festival (5th of the fifth moon), or the Dragonboat Festival (*t'ang wu*). The occasion of this is said to have an occurrence in Tung-ting Lake in the province of Hunan in the long ago. A brave and well-loved chieftain (*Chü-yuen*) was drowned there under specially tragic circumstances. To save him out of the clutches of the demon that had seized him the people began to institute festivities for the water dragon.

It is especially the many boat people who take active part in this festival. They line up in their long row boats decorated with green for the occasion. There is a large crew of stout oarsmen, a steersman in the stern, and a man at the bow, dressed as a clown, who directs the stroke with shouts and dramatic movements. Often it develops into a race between several boats, and if the passions are aroused it may result in both fighting and drownings ere set of sun. A multitude of private boats, laden with people in festive attire, may be seen on the river, and masses of people along shore. The business places are closed for a time, and China has one of her brief days of rest. Otherwise it is only at New Years and the Festival of the Eighth Moon that Chinese take a holiday. The year is accordingly divided into three by these three great festivals, and the time element in contracts, house rent, etc., is determined according to them. The preceding days are therefore pre-eminently a time of making up accounts and of money collections; a time also of suicides and setting of fires among the unfortunate ones who are sunk in debt.

The Autumn Festival, or Festival of the Eighth Moon (15th of the eighth moon—*Chung ch'iu*) has little of real religious con-



tent. The only thing might be the general movement of visitation to the nearby pagodas. That day all who can possibly make the trip must ascend the tower. The moon is supposed to be specially clear that evening, and therefore the proper thing is to "enjoy the view" of it from verandahs and lofty places. In some places one may see miniature pagodas of tile built in front of the houses. The young folks then gather wood and build a fire within them. If they can get the bits of tile red hot it means a good and fortunate year; if not, the year promises many disappointments (*shao pao-ta*).

#### LOCAL RELIGIONS BEFORE CONFUCIUS

Examination and study of ancient oracle bones (pieces of bone or stone chips upon which mysterious signs are inscribed) has recently led to the conclusion that even before the time of Confucius, in those little rival kingdoms (feudal states) into which China was divided, there arose quite distinct religious systems. Researches in the old archives have helped to lend certainty to that supposition.

This is probably one of the reasons why one finds today round about in China such a mass of differing local divinities and religious ideas and usages. Of course one finds everywhere the fundamental elements which we have sketched in the foregoing. And then there was the process of unification around one or more of the main concepts, out of which developed a national religion.

Foremost in use are the characters for man (*jen*), for heaven (*tien*), earth (*tu*), water (*shui*), fire (*ho*), etc. Besides these, there are characters for animals, plants, and constellations, for it is apparent that the Chinese had from ancient times a considerable acquaintance with the starry heavens.

Upon the basis of these characters the "ministers of religion" (a staff of highly pedantic *literati* gathered at the royal palace) built their systems. A great number of new characters were invented, derived from the basic ideographs chosen. These were to express the fine shades of meaning which it was necessary to maintain in opposition to the neighbouring rival states' "barbaric" methods of writing. And not only so, but they must bring into contempt the characters these had chosen to denote their sacred objects. Hence there came a mass of extra strokes and additions, and so the Chinese language, already sufficiently overloaded, was forced to carry still more dead weight. Another method was that of using the opponents' sacred characters and concepts to denote profane things, a procedure not unknown in

the more recent history of China when attacking an opponent in the field of religion. (Cf. the Hunanese Chow Han's abusive writings against Christianity before the Boxer uprising.)

But there is naturally more than mere pettiness to be found in these local religious systems. Some of them attained on certain points real speculative depth. It was undoubtedly from them that Taoism gathered some of its finest religious treasures.

There is another very interesting aspect. In these local religious systems are discovered manifest attempts to preserve and develop the most ancient religious values which they had with them as a heritage from the time of break-up in the lands to the west. And this is a field in which specialists will be able to give us some very interesting information when the researches are finished and the results gathered together. Here more than anywhere else one comes in upon those great common regions of religion in which our race, too, in its many divisions, will recognize its most basic lines of religious thought.

Already at this period the famous "Five Sacred Mountains" (Wu Yoh) seem to play an important part in the religious life of the Chinese. We shall touch upon them later in dealing with Taoism and Buddhism, but will mention them here in order as part of the general survey:

- (1) Tai-shan in Shantung,
- (2) Hua-shan in Shensi,
- (3) Hêng-shan in Shansi,
- (4) Nan-Yoh-shan, or Hênshan, in Hunan, and
- (5) Sung-shan in Honan.

We shall then proceed to consider the great religious systems of China, and shall begin with that which more than anything else has enabled China to live its own characteristic life so long and so true to type, both nationally and politically—that is, Confucianism.



## CONFUCIANISM

It is only in a very unreal sense that Confucianism can be called a religion. It is much rather an ethical system embracing the individual, the family and society, and in a special degree the imperial and princely house. Nothing was more foreign to the purpose of Confucius than to be the founder of a religion. As he saw his task, it was to turn the eyes of the people to the past, for there the norm was to be found for faith and thought, and for the life of individual, home, and state. It was there, in the ancient Chinese classical writings, and even more in the illuminating example left by the best of the ancient rulers, that the solution might be found of the great problems of good government, and of right living for individual, home, and society. Confucius therefore stated quite clearly: "I am not a creator; I am a transmitter".

And still, even though Confucianism is not a religion in the proper sense, the Confucian system of ethics does certainly rest on a religious foundation. So for Confucius *Tao* was the controlling concept. But this *Tao* was revealed in the old classical writings, and so out of them he set forth what in his opinion belonged to the innermost principles of life. But he did more. He himself lived according to those principles. The group of disciples who companied with him saw in him the Master who in his own person represented the great law of life. With his extraordinary feeling for reality he naturally emphasized in the old traditions that which would serve life. Sober and truthful as he was, his whole life, his speech, his writings and his public conduct together constituted a single earnest appeal to the people for willing subjection to duty and obligation. Compare his famous sayings: "Let a man die before sunset it doesn't matter, if only he has embraced the *Tao* in the morning." And further: "As to the *Tao*, we must not be separated from it for a single moment."

Out of the varied, misty traditions of ancient China Confucius formed a strong, well articulated system according to which the whole social life could be built. And even though it was not always realized, still it did come to stand for the whole country as the great ideal, and from the imperial household to the meanest hut there was always some attempt at least at formal observance.



Confucius became what he was, not only because the historical situation was prepared for a reformer of his kind, but still more because in him the Chinese racial spirit found its full expression. No wonder he remains, even down to our own time, China's greatest son!

It was in a time of endless disturbance and untold misery that Confucius appeared.

It was in the time of the Chow dynasty. The founder of this dynasty, Wu-wang (1122 B.C.), was a strong and able ruler. But he was guilty of the cardinal mistake of making larger or smaller land grants to the military leaders and statesmen who had aided him in deposing the former incompetent ruling house. These helpers became counts, barons, and the like. Within a short time these counts and barons became very powerful, and as the baronies were handed down by inheritance, the empire was soon divided into a number of feudal states. The strongest of these set themselves up as little kingdoms, resulting in the worst sort of disturbances. Lawlessness and disorder reigned everywhere.

Quite naturally in times like that literary activities were largely neglected. Only a few had any knowledge of the classical writings.

Superstition, robbery and murder increased in a disturbing degree. Exorcists and sorcerers had their golden age, for they could bleed the ignorant masses without hindrance.

It is noted with emphasis in the reputed records of this period that earthquakes, floods and other physical calamities also made their appearance in a degree never before known, not to mention the famine that followed in the wake of the plundering bands.

It is against this dark background that Confucius appears.

Confucius saw the light of day in the year 552 B.C. He was born in the feudal state of Lu, which was in the southern part of what is now the province of Shantung.

His father was an officer, distinguished for his bravery. His name was Shu Leang-heih. In his seventieth year he had married a woman much younger than himself, Yen Ching-tsai. There was therefore little prospect of their having children. Their joy was all the greater when a son was born.

As might be expected, legends grew up around the story of his birth. It is related that the child was born in a cave of Mount Ni. The mother was directed in a vision to go to this place at the time of birth. The dragons of the air came down

over the cave, and celestial light shone from the face of the child.

Otherwise the records of Confucius' early childhood are very meagre—his real name is Kung-tsze. That he has been presented to people of the West with a Latin form to his name is owing to the activities of the first Jesuit missionaries.

While he was still a child it was noticed that he preferred to play with cultural objects, and that he enjoyed being present at affairs where there were ceremonies.

At the age of fifteen he was definitely linked up with literary studies. His favourite study was history. Right from childhood he found therein his two ideal characters, Yao and Shun, and all his dreams of the future came to turn about the golden age produced by these two ancient emperors.

At the age of nineteen he married a woman from the neighbouring state, Sung. But this marriage was not happy, and he later divorced her, after she had borne him a son.

The ruling prince of Lu, who had already been impressed with the young scholar's great ability, sent a congratulatory gift to Confucius at the birth of his son. It was a large live carp. When Confucius saw the fish he said: "My son's name shall be Li" (*i.e.*, Carp).

This child is not much mentioned in the story of Confucius. On one single occasion when he had grown to be a youth he was asked by one of the disciples of Confucius: "Have you heard many teachings from your father beyond what we hear from him?" "Oh no", answered Li, "I passed him one day as he was standing alone and thinking in the main court. Then he asked me: 'Have you read the Odes?' [*i.e.*, the old hymns of worship]. When I replied 'Not yet', he added: 'If you have not read the Odes it is not possible to converse with you.'—Another day I met him in the same place, and he said: 'Have you read the rules of deportment?' When I answered 'Not yet', he added: 'If you do not learn the laws of deportment your character will not be built up'."

The disciple who had been told of these meetings between father and son says in that connection: "I had asked concerning one thing, and I found out about three: I have learned the importance of the Odes, and of the rules of deportment—and I have come to understand that the superior man maintains a certain reserve toward his son!"

As Confucius was a man of small means, he accepted already at the age of twenty the position of director of the state granary. A little later he was promoted to the superintendency of agriculture. But after only two years he withdrew from these public

occupations to dedicate himself to the work of teaching, which was so much more in his line.

It is quite interesting to note how Confucius sought in every possible way to develop himself, at the same time that he was the teacher. Thus we hear that at the age of 28 he undertook with great enthusiasm the study of music. He even went far in archery.

By this time he enjoyed a great reputation. It is significant that horses and carriage were sent him from the court for the carefully planned journey which he was about to make to the imperial court where Laotze had his position. He reached the imperial capital, and the time he spent there meant much to him. Here he had an opportunity actually to see that which he had so often read about—a reflection of the glory of the ancients, in architecture, court ceremonies, etc.

Shortly after his return we find him surrounded by about 3,000 disciples. With enthusiasm they listened to him as he set forth the various relations of life. Instruction was given mostly in the form of dialogue. Thoughtful questions were highly valued by Confucius. He wished to deal only with wide-awake and industrious students. There is a well-known saying of his: "I do not open the truth to one who is not himself eager for knowledge. When I have revealed one corner of an object I expect my students to find the other three corners themselves."

However, Confucius was not permitted long to remain in peace with his work of teaching. The state of Lu was torn by uprisings, and Confucius, who was loyal to the ruling house, was obliged together with the prince to withdraw to the state of Ch'i. This was at that time the home of Chinese music, and for a time the music-loving Confucius could enjoy the noble art to his heart's content. It is recorded that he was so gripped by the power of melody "that for three months he did not taste meat".

He also attempted at this time to prevail upon the ruler of Ch'i to adopt the principles of government which were constantly championed by him. But the Duke replied: "I am too old to begin that now."

It was at that time that Confucius had the opportunity to begin his great lifework—a critical sifting of the many source writings at hand from China's ancient period, treating of historical, mythological, ceremonial and political subjects. This literary activity continued through many years, interrupted by many stormy episodes in his active life, until it was finished off in the eve of his life by the independent and broadly conceived work, *The Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un-ch'iu)*. How-



ever, we shall not enter upon that phase of his life here, as the connection will be better served by treating his literary activity in a separate section.

After being busy for some time with the extensive work of analysis, Confucius received an invitation from the government of his home state to take over the position of magistrate in the city of Chung-tu. This invitation he accepted, and so for the first time he was given opportunity to put his principles into practice. And history records that he was very successful: "Good laws and regulations were given for the living, and the good old ceremonies for the remembrance and worship of the dead were again instituted. Diet lists were worked out for the old and for the young, and the two sexes were separated as never before. Caskets were once more made with their proper thickness, and ceremonies at weddings and solemn occasions were followed without abridgment."

When the feudal ruler of the state saw the brilliant results he was amazed, and asked if such an achievement could imaginably be realized for the whole state. "Yes, indeed," Confucius said, "and not only in the state of Lu, but in the whole empire."

Confucius was then made Chief Justice in the state of Lu, and the same favourable results were soon seen throughout the whole land. But as the state of Lu began now to prosper as never before, the envy of the other states was aroused.

Confucius thought it best therefore to withdraw. He then travelled about from court to court of the smaller states, offering his services. At some of them he was well received, but he was most often met with coldness or contempt. He was often the victim, also, of perfidious intrigue.

Upon these weary wanderings he was constantly accompanied by a small band of disciples. Best known among them and most beloved of his learners were Yen-Hui (An-tsze), the John type of Confucianism, and the free-spoken Tze-Kung, its Peter type. Many brilliant conversations are preserved from these travels. Partly afoot, and sometimes in carts, they made their way over the endless plains of north Honan. They were exiles and wanderers, but constantly sowing the seed which later sprang up and brought great blessing to China. But despite all disappointments and persecutions Confucius kept his faith in his mission. His constant comfort was: "Heaven has called me, and the superior man does not lose courage if the obstacles are many!"

For fourteen years Confucius was forced to be absent from his native state of Lu. For a long time he hoped for a new invitation from there that would give him the opportunity to dedi-

cate to his home state the remainder of his strength. But no call came, and so with heavy heart he retired to private life, settling in the place of his birth in his seventieth year.

It meant much additional sorrow to him just at this time to lose his dearest disciple, Yen Hui, and his son Li.

But during these last two years which he passed quietly the old master was surrounded by several grandsons, and the newer generations were coming up, in the midst of which his good teachings were beginning to bear fruit.

Illness came upon Confucius in the spring of 480 B.C. He realized that it would be his death. Quietly and calmly he went to his chamber, saying these words:

“The great mountain must fall.  
The strong timber is broken.  
The wise man fades as does the plant.”

After a week's illness he fell peacefully asleep. He was buried in his native state, Lu, in the present district of Chüfu in the province of Shantung. An old avenue of cypresses leads to the cemetery, which is surrounded by a high wall and a row of ancient oaks. Large memorials of stone with ancient inscriptions adorn his grave. Nearby stands an old burial chapel.

His family and kindred have lived in the province of Shantung down through the centuries, and are now a numerous clan whose head is accorded great privileges by country and people.

The picture one gets of Confucius through reading the various records about him is on the whole favourable. There is presented a powerful personality whose chief characteristic is an outstanding fidelity to truth. The faithfulness with which he pursued his mission to the last, the patience with which he bore his trials, and the self-sacrificing spirit which marked all his conduct cannot but command a deep respect. His conversations with his disciples also reveal much wisdom and a profound knowledge of human nature.

Alongside a well-developed self-respect he showed in his conduct a humility which contrasts most strongly with the ordinary prevailing megalomania. Not only his expressions regarding metaphysical questions and his own imperfection, but still more his life shows that he was willing to be instructed. In this connection the story of his meeting with the poor old fisherman, Y-fotse, is significant. He greeted him as a superior, and listened with unfeigned respect to his explanations.

But weaknesses are also apparent. How anxious the great

man was, even to pedantry, lest he should fail to maintain his rôle in the maze of ceremonial and etiquette with which he had surrounded himself and those about him! Everything was prescribed: the movements of the hands, the way the skirts of the garment should be lifted, etc. Individual, home and society should be bound, not only in the larger matters, but everything, to the smallest details, should go according to ceremonial. And, if only the ceremonies were observed, then all important matters would go smoothly, and "all under heaven" would be happy.

It is remarkable, too, that he who had such an extensive knowledge of human nature so little understood its impotence. In connection with this goes his very limited view of purely religious matters, and his pronounced scepticism.

Here lies the explanation also of the remarkable phenomenon that no one has been so successful as he in creating through the centuries a stereotyped race of disciples, both knowing and doubting much, but also often very weak and immoral—the Chinese *literati*. It should also be said, however, that from this camp China has drawn many of her best and noblest sons, men of moral power, clear thought, inflexible energy, and warm heart.

We have previously intimated that, according to the traditional view, Confucius's main product is his literary work. Not that he has amazed the world with a prolific production of original writings, for he produced just one original work (*chun-ch'iu*), but as the conscientious research student, and as the great mediator of the rich cultural life of the ancient past he has done more for his country than any other Chinese.

We have already spoken of his life-long enthusiasm for the study of the classical literature. No one had to the same extent lived himself into the spirit of that body of literature. Therefore he was also more able than anyone else, with his sound critical perception, to pare away the unauthentic and superfluous accretions of the years.

These old collections of writings, which together made up the ancient Chinese literature, existed in his time in the form of disconnected fragments, inscribed on bamboo tablets. The various copies which were preserved in the public archives also differed somewhat from one another, in that additions and errors of copying had found their way in. Only a very few of the scholars knew the writings at first hand. Among the masses of the people could be found only a faint reflection of the truth content of the literature. This made it all the easier for the dark shadows of animism and demonology to spread themselves over the sea of humanity.



Confucius gave himself with energy and enthusiasm to the vitally important work of editing. With sure hand he pruned away the untrustworthy and superfluous matter, and placed the individual fragments in harmonious connection. He investigated and compared, and did not grow weary of his task till he could present—to use modern terminology—a critical edition of all the ancient source writings on history, mythology, ceremonial, and political economy. *Li-chi*, the Book of Ceremonies, was, however, not finished in its present clarified form before the time of the Han dynasty.

We present here a sample from *Shi-ching* (Book of Odes), and choose one of the passages containing the most frequent mention of God (*Shangti*). The expression "God Most High" comes out strongly in the reputed editing of Confucius. This ode is from the time of King U—*i.e.*, about 1135 B.C.

God Most High—how he is majestic,

In his world governance exalted and mighty!  
He reaches out to all places of the world,  
To give confidence to peoples, and create order.  
See the princes of the two separate kingdoms,  
How they ill-neglected their duties.  
Behold the four other kingdoms—  
They do not either bear inspection.  
Therefore also has God determined  
To destroy their great might,  
And westward move the seat of power.

These dead trees his hand uproots;  
They stand there hindering his purpose.  
But in love he prunes the good trees,  
And they stand in rows of beauty.  
He trims the beech; he prunes the tamarind;  
He cleanses both the hedgerow and the grove.  
Exalted is by him the fruitful one,  
All barbarians filled with fear and trembling;  
Safe and sure sits king upon his throne,  
Under Heaven's protection with his spouse.

God looks upon these mountain heights and peaks;  
He sees the oaks robed in their beauty.  
A way he shapes through pine and cypress forest;  
Ruler and his kingdom both are made by him.  
Thus he did in days of Tai-pe,  
Acted thus in times of Yuan-ki.  
For this Yuan-ki to his brother  
Himself a brother showed, and tender.  
Still remains, therefore, his power;  
What he won can never be lost.

\*The whole body of literature was collected under the name  
*The Five Collections of Writings* (or Five Classics—*Wu-ching*),

his own history of his native state, Lu, making the fifth volume, under the name *Spring and Autumn Annals* (Ch'un-chiu). As the old names of the writings were kept, and Confucius' own work was added, the ancient Chinese literature was put in the order under which it is known to this day in China:

*Wu-ching*—The Five Classics.

1. *Shu-ching*—The Book of History.
2. *Yi-ching*—The Book of Changes.
3. *Shi-ching*—The Book of Odes.
4. *Li-chi*—The Book of Ceremonies.
5. *Ch'un-ch'iu*—The Spring and Autumn Annals.

It will be of help if we here in connection with the survey of literature given above make mention of the writings which are more or less directly bound up with Confucius. These Confucian Writings, in the strictest sense, are all by disciples of the great master, partly those who had personally walked with Confucius and listened to his speaking, partly disciples farther on in the chain who carried on the thought of the Confucian school.

China owes very much to these disciples. It must be remembered that Confucius himself wrote very little. It is therefore mainly through these disciples of his that the later world has gained knowledge of his thoughts. With deep reverence for the great teacher, and with the greatest care, his disciples have reported his utterances upon the most varied subjects. He is generally introduced as speaking in the first person, as different ones of the disciples (especially Yen-Hui and Tze-Kung) ask him questions.

Those Confucian writings, which now go under the one name *Sī-shu*, or The Four Books, are divided into four parts:

The first of these, *Ta-hsioh*, or The Great Teaching, has since Sung times down to the outbreak of the Revolution continued to be the first textbook of the children in China when they have finished their a b c's (*San-tze-ching*). It is quite brief, but summarizes, in the opinion of the Chinese, the leading principles of ethical living. We shall later give a little citation from it.

The second book in the collection of Confucian writings is *Luen-yu*, or "Fragments". Here Confucius and a number of the great men of ancient times are reported in speech and discussion. It is accordingly "fragments" of their conversations which the book presents.

This is also the case in the third book, *Chung-yung*, or *The Doctrine of the Mean*. This book is said to have been collected by Tze-Sze, the grandson of Confucius.

The fourth book was written about 200 years after the death of Confucius by his greatest and best-known disciple, Mencius. The book also carries his name, and is called *Meng-tze*.

Another book must be mentioned which, though it does not belong to *The Four Books*, yet has a genuine Confucian origin. It is *Hsiao-ching*, or *The Book of Filial Duties*, allegedly written by Confucius' grandson, Tze-Sze.

A characteristic of all these Confucian books is their fondness for building upon the ancient writings edited by Confucius. There are long citations from these writings, with explanations, and all argumentation is based upon *Wu-ching*—a relationship like that between Old and New Testaments.

A list of these books, then, will be as follows:

1. *Ta-hsioh*, or The Great Teaching.
2. *Luen-yu*, or Fragments.
3. *Chung-yung*, or The Doctrine of the Mean.
4. *Meng-tze*, or the Writings of Mencius.

As we now seek to give a presentation of Confucian thought as this has been formulated both by Confucius and by his most prominent disciples, it may be worth while to quote the most characteristic portion of the previously mentioned *Ta-hsioh* (Great Teaching):

That which the Great Teaching offers is: to illustrate the eminent virtue, to renew the people, and then to rest in the highest distinction. If one knows the proper place of rest, it is determined what one must seek. When that is determined a state of immovable calm is reached, which results in a salutary repose. In this state of repose careful studies may be made, and these studies will be followed by the winning of the desired goal.—Things have their roots and their branches; acts have their ending and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last—it is of this the Great Teaching gives instruction.

“The ancients who wished to illustrate the eminent virtue throughout the kingdom first put their own states in the proper order. Wishing to order their states, they began by regulating their families. Desiring to regulate their families, they cultivated first their own personality. When they sought to cultivate their personality they first prepared their own hearts. In preparing their hearts they became serious in thought. To become serious in thought they increased their knowledge to the uttermost. Such enlargement of knowledge



comes from investigation of phenomena. When phenomena were examined knowledge was perfected. As their knowledge was made perfect their thoughts became serious. As their thoughts became serious their hearts were rightly prepared. Their hearts set in the right condition, their personality was cultivated. As their personality was cultivated their families were regulated. As their families were regulated their states were well governed. As the states were well governed the whole kingdom was filled with peace and happiness. From the Son of Heaven to the masses of the people, all must regard cultivation of personality as the root of all other virtues.

The Emperor, "Son of Heaven", is given a large place by Confucius. It is, in fact, Confucius who first clarifies in theory the idea of the Emperor as the incarnation of divine power on earth. He had seen so much of the deplorable results of feudalism that he became on that account the warm advocate of imperial rule. He therefore hastened China's unification, the great accomplishment which Chin Shih-wang later (221-209 B.C.) finished. No wonder that the imperial house in China has constantly felt itself under obligation to Confucius, and has continually shown his descendants the greatest favour.

But if Confucius magnified the Emperor, he also laid upon him the highest requirements. His favourite statement: "If the ruler is virtuous the people will also be virtuous", was applied in full force to the emperor. Confucius pointed out with emphasis the Emperor's responsibility as the great representative of the people before God, and it is no accident that from his time the ancient rite of sacrifice by the Emperor in the Temple of Heaven received a strong impetus.

Confucius speaks much of Heaven (*tien*). He feels himself called by Heaven for his work, and in things both great and small is dependent upon it. In his usage of terms the word *Shang-ti* (God) sometimes takes the place of Heaven. Confucius gives its old position to this ancient and most sacred term for a personal supreme God. He speaks about how the best emperors in ancient China always examined their lives as before the face of *Shang-ti*.

But after Confucius *Shang-ti* becomes for the masses an aristocratic, remote God, unapproachable for intercession and worship. Heaven itself received but a very modest place in the ordinary man's daily and yearly worship.

All the more impressive, therefore, was the great service of sacrifice to *Shang-ti* carried out by the Emperor on the night before the winter solstice at the Altar of Heaven (*Tien-tan*), and

in addition to this, the sacrifice at the beginning of the first month of the year at the Altar of the Vaulted Heaven, both within the area of the Temple of Heaven. The first of these is a moving act of confession by the Emperor as the great high priest of the people, while the second is an act of petition for a good and fruitful year.

Concerning this first great festival of sacrifice within the immense area of the Temple of Heaven—a space large enough for a city of 50,000 inhabitants—it may be said that it is among the most solemn things in Chinese religious life. The Emperor, followed by the eldest in the imperial family, by the ministers and highest officials in Peking, moved in solemn procession up the steps from one great marble terrace to the other until he reached the Altar of Heaven. This lies open to the sky at the top of three marble terraces. The four sets of marble steps represent the four points of the compass. The Emperor, who had previously purified himself with fasting and meditation, carried out the various sacrifices, and the prayers were spoken by the Emperor, and by the high imperial officials, with interludes of choral and orchestral music.

We quote a part of one of the most inspiring prayers, offered by the Emperor at the winter solstice, December 22, 1539:

*Before the sacrifice:*

O thou great God, thou hast assured us that thou wilt hear us, for thou carest for us as a father.

I, thy child, dull and unenlightened, am not able to express to thee the feelings that move within me; hallowed be thy great name.

Reverently we spread before thee these costly silks and precious stones, and as swallows rejoice in the spring, so we praise thee for the riches of thy love.

The Great One, enthroned on high, bows down and beholds us with favour. How shall we in our lowliness receive all this?

I, thine unworthy servant, come before thee with worship, and present this precious cup [lifting the cup] to him whose years have no end.

Men and all creation are enclosed in thy love as in a garden, O God. All that lives is beholden to thee for thy goodness. And yet—who knows whence comes the blessing? Thou alone, O Lord, art the fount (father and mother) of all things.

*After the sacrifice:*

The service is finished, but our poor effort, earnest though it be, can hardly bring the whole to full expression. Thine unparalleled goodness is without end.

As a potter hast thou formed all things. The little and the great are wrapped up in thee as in a garment.

The sense of thy goodness is graven upon thy servant's heart, but I am powerless to give utterance to my feelings.

Thou in thy goodness dost bear with us, and despite our imperfections dost bestow upon us life and prosperity.

Men and spirits together joyfully praise thee, O God, thou who art the Lord.

What limit can there be, what measure, when we solemnly celebrate thy name?

For thou hast established the heavens from eternity, and thou dost form the earth.

His dominion is eternal.

I, his humble servant, bow my head and lay it in the dust, as I bathe in his grace and glory.

*Conclusion:*

We have worshipped and written the great name upon this sheet, shining as a jewel.

Now we present it (reverently) to God and burn it.

In like manner we burn these costly offerings of silk and delicate foods, as we pray that they may rise toward the distant blue on the wings of the mighty flames and be received.

From all the ends of earth do men look up to thee. All humanity, all that is in the earth rejoice together in the great name."

The immense park-like enclosure was lighted with all the oriental splendour of colour that could be achieved, and a gripping solemnity rested upon the mighty gathering. He who was the head of one-third of the earth's inhabitants drew near to the eternal God with confession and worship, for himself and for the people.

But here too the monotheistic *cultus* is broken. The Emperor's sacrifice is followed by similar ceremonies of sacrifice in the second marble terrace. Here high officials brought offerings to the sun, moon, stars, the clouds, the rain, the wind, and the thunder.

The place of these two great festivals of sacrifice is to the south of the Chinese City of Peking (as distinguished from the Tartar City).

On the opposite side of the city, to the north, there is another large walled-in space. This is the enclosure of the Altar of Earth in honour of *Hou-tu* (earth kingdom). At this place was held a great festival of sacrifice at the time of the summer solstice, under the leadership of the Emperor, princes of the imperial



house, or other high representatives of the imperial family. Here they prayed the good genius of the earth for good crops.

At the same time the imperial ancestors were worshipped. These came in the third class, as at the festival for *Shang-ti*, the place they have always held in the Confucian system.

These imperial ancestral spirits, which became also the patron divinities for the whole empire, were also worshipped in the ancestral hall in the Tartar City, as well as at the graves and in the great burial halls built near the tombs. Many of these halls surpass the most beautiful temples in splendour and vastness of construction.

While the highest form of worship, the worship of *Shang-ti*, has thus been reserved for the Emperor, the masses are directed to the limited field of ancestor worship, and to the careful observance of the Five Relationships (*wu-lun*).

As we shall devote a special chapter to ancestor worship, we shall here at once enter upon the treatment of the Five Relationships. These are: (1) Ruler and minister, (2) father and son, (3) husband and wife, (4) elder and younger brothers, (5) friend and friend.

In the view of Confucius these relationships were ordained by Heaven. They were part of Tao, the law of existence, and all personal and social happiness depended upon their proper observance.

Corresponding to these five relationships there are also five cardinal virtues, which are constantly put forward by Confucius as the means whereby society and the individual are to be bound together in harmony (*wu ch'ang*). These are: (1) *Jen*—benevolence; (2) *Yi*—justice; (3) *Li*—correctness in conduct; (4) *Chih*—good judgment; (5) *Hsin*—adherence to one's word, faith-keeping.

Compare also the five elements of which the earth consists, according to ancient thought, as well as the five categories for the worship in the home, mentioned under "Ancestor Worship". There is the additional consideration that care in the observance of the five chief relationships is the surest way to arm oneself against the evil spirits.

Here we come to one of the most interesting points in Confucianism: Confucius believed in spirits, both good and bad. In spite of all his scepticism he was obliged to do so. The reason is not difficult to understand: the existence of spirits was documented entirely too clearly in the ancient classics (*Wu-ching*) to permit of doubt.

•He divides demons into three classes: (1) Those that live in the mountains and forests; (2) those in the water; (3) those

which dwell in the earth. Of these he thinks the hosts of mountain and forest demons the most dangerous. When these demon spirits show themselves it often means misfortune for large districts—flood, drought, or disturbance in nature, which often destroys thousands of homes in China. In such cases it is, according to Confucius, the solemn duty of officials to step into the breach on behalf of the people with sacrifices, with fasting and worship. But the masses of the people who, not least in cases of this kind, in Taoist fashion, gave themselves up to outright orgies of exorcism, he admonishes to concentrate on the simplest demands of worship, observance of the "five relationships", and worship of the ancestors. Cf. his well-known saying: "Revere the gods, but do not disturb them".

On the whole it is characteristic of Confucius to turn the attention of the people from the supernatural to what the senses could lay hold upon. He felt, too, that he was lacking in a clear understanding of the deeper mysteries of the spirit world and all that lay beyond death. He was also highly incensed over all the deception he saw practised by the many exorcists, and the extensive neglect of the simplest demands of the law of life for the slavish use of empty magical ceremonies. He was never weary of repeating the old statement from the Book of Changes: "He who obeys Heaven is protected; he who disobeys Heaven is destroyed." Only the one who orders his life according to the *Tao* of Heaven is happy and achieves the "beneficent peace"; no demon spirits can harm him.

The disciples' very pointed questions regarding the spirits, life after death, etc., were always answered indefinitely. Here are a couple of examples. One of his disciples said one day: "Great Teacher, tell us about the life after death!" Confucius replied: "How should I know death, I who know not life?" When the question was put forward concerning the spirit world the same kind of answer was given: "How should we, who have not done our duty toward men, be able to fulfil our obligations in respect of the spirits?" One of his disciples once presented this very pointed question: "Do the dead know anything about the worship we give them, or are they unaware of it?" Confucius replied: "If I say that the dead know of the worship I fear that loving sons and obedient grandsons will squander their property in honouring the dead; if I say that they have not this knowledge, I am afraid that unfaithful sons will leave their parents unburied." Of Confucius himself, however, it is definitely stated that he conscientiously observed both the rules of ancestor worship and the ceremonials in respect of the spirits.

## CONFUCIAN RULES OF LIFE

The goal which Confucius constantly held before his disciples was to become a *chun-tze*, a nobleman of the spirit. To achieve this one must begin to "cultivate one's personality". For this purpose Confucius formulated many rules of conduct. Some of these are loftily conceived; others are very trivial from our point of view.

As the guide for conduct he chose the idea of "reciprocity". From this comes the well-known saying: "Refrain from doing to others what you would not have them do to you." To the heights of Christ's teaching he never reached, as instance his reply when the disciples asked concerning the truth of the doctrine that "insults should be requited with kindness", Confucius said in that connection: "With what will you then reward kindness? Recompense injuries with justice, and kindness with kindness."

Following are some of the pearls of Confucius' rules of conduct:

"The man who at the sight of gain remembers justice, who when he sees danger is ready to give up his destiny, and who never forgets an old agreement—such a one must be counted a perfect man."

"Regard faithfulness and sincerity as the most vital principles."

Confucius acknowledged that he had not reached the status of a perfect man. "For", said he, "there are four things which distinguish a *ch'un-tze*, and I have not yet achieved one of them: to serve my father as I would require that my son should serve me; to serve my elder brother as I would that my younger brother should serve me; and to act toward my friends as I would wish them to act toward me."

The following statements are also remarkable: "Learning without thought is wasted effort; thought without learning is dangerous"; and, "Completely virtuous is the man who is steadfast, even though men pay no attention to him."

## CONFUCIAN THOUGHT DEVELOPED BY DISCIPLES

About 3,000 disciples are said to have followed Confucius. Among these were a number who developed in a creditable way the thought and system of Confucius. It is primarily owing to them and their disciples in turn through several generations, that Confucianism became such a corrective influence in society. The school was organized—the Confucian school—which typic-



ally gathered up what was peculiar to Chinese thought life. It was therefore quite natural that the steadily increasing group of scholars should affiliate with this school. There they found spiritual kinsmen, were adopted into the great brotherhood of "the learned", and were soon led to take pride in maintaining the traditions. It is quite remarkable to see how the sceptical tendency, the coldness toward the deeper religious life, and the excessively polite, ceremonial manner which we know so well from the Master, continue in the ranks of Confucianism down to the present day.

That there is often something of sham in the variegated circle of these scholars is not to be denied, as, for example, in their contempt for the common idolatry. Theoretically they strongly condemn it. But no sooner does sickness, distress, or death knock at the door of their home than they rush to the exorcists and ask their help.

It is also a deplorable fact that the Confucian camp has always exercised its influence upon the authorities in the direction of persecuting the freer movements. Dr. de Groot, in his *Sectarianism and Religious Persecutions*, has shown from the original sources that nowhere in the world have there been such violent and persistent persecutions as in China, and these have been most often staged by the scholars.

But it was not only traditions and etiquette that held these *literati* together. They also carried on effective criticism within their own circle. The greatest reputations were therefore achieved by those who attacked scholars of another way of thinking and teaching.

Among those who chose to go their own way, perhaps the best known are Mo-Ti, who preached brotherly love; and Yang Chū, who championed self-love. Among the works of the former the most widely known are his *Universal Love* and his essay against war.

#### MENCIUS

The two mentioned above met their master in Mencius, who was born 371 B.C., in the state of Tsow. As the unquestionably greatest of Confucius' disciples, his Chinese name, Mengtze, was latinized by the Jesuits, and so he became known, at least by name, to the West.

He was an exceedingly well read and richly endowed man. Many of the modern *literati* in China consider him more gifted than the Master himself. One thing is certain. With regard to emotional depth he far surpasses Confucius. But he lacked the clear outlook and organizing power of the latter.

Mencius lost his father early, but his splendid mother took charge of his training. She stands out as one of the finest types in the world of Chinese women.

Country and people were in the midst of a period of terrible decline. Mencius, like his great predecessor, was able to gather a large group of disciples about him, and it was due largely to this group that the nation did not go entirely to pieces in those difficult times.

Mencius did not introduce a system of his own. He held very closely to that of Confucius. He emphasized one particular point in the system more than any other: The people are primary: the emperor is the servant of the people. It is not surprising that his writings have not enjoyed the favour of the successive generations of rulers. Nor is it a mere coincidence that the sons of the new China look upon Mencius with special favour. He maintained with great clarity that man has both selfish and altruistic elements in his nature, both of which are good, if only the right knowledge and right example are followed.

Like Confucius, he sought to persuade several of the feudal rulers to adopt his ideas for their status. He lived for short periods at some of the rulers' courts. The result was much the same: a few attempts at new methods of government were made, but soon it was back upon the old plane again. Mencius himself realized that his efforts in this direction were in vain. But still he was of good courage, for "he had done the work to which Heaven had called him". He died 289 B.C. Not before A.D. 1080 was Mencius recognized for what he was: the foremost among the disciples of Confucius.

#### THE PRINCIPAL ADVOCATES OF CONFUCIANISM

Among leading Confucianists of the early period must be mentioned Confucius' grandson, Tze-Sze. He gained fame especially as the compiler and interpreter of the Confucian textbooks.

The most celebrated Confucian scholar during the T'ang dynasty was Han-yü, who was born in the province of Honan A.D. 768. He was equally gifted as statesman, poet, and philosopher. His poems and essays are considered models.

In his youth he seems to have been influenced by both Buddhism and Taoism, but when he reached greater maturity he turned against both these religions and became a typical Confucianist.

When Emperor Hsien Tsung sent a deputation to Shensi to get a bone of Buddha for one of the temples in the capital he

wrote a vigorous protest. The result was that he was exiled to the interior of Kwangtung province, but there also he rose to high favour with the people. He was later restored to his old position of honour. He died in 824 and was shortly afterward canonized. After 1084 his tablet was placed in the Confucian temples, and he has accordingly been known by the name Han Wen Kung.

In reading his philosophical essays, collected in the classical work *Tang-wen*, one is struck by the fresh, personal tone of his style. He freely criticises Laotze in his treatment of the concepts *Tao* and *Teh* ("The Way" and "Virtue"). In contrast to the old Confucian teachers (e.g., Mencius) he maintained that man is born with widely varying tendencies, from the ethical point of view. Some are by nature good, others bad, and others again a mixture of good and bad.

It may be mentioned that there exists a tradition, that in his old age he was completely converted to Buddhism through a meeting with the noble-minded old monk Tai Tien.

Mention should also be made of the five famous interpreters who, even until now, rank as the best and most typical Confucianists: Chou, Chang, the two brothers Ch'eng, and Chü.

Especially the last named, Chü-fu-tze (Chu Hsi), who was born in Chekiang A.D. 1130, the son of a mandarin from Anhui, is of extraordinary significance for the masterly way in which he gathered all the Confucian teachings into a concordance of sixty-six volumes. In him the agnostic trend of thought receives its coldest and clearest development. It is significant that from his time religious warmth and spirituality are seen to disappear more and more from the camp of the *literati*. Chü-fu-tze's importance for the intellectual life of China has in recent years been brilliantly shown through J. P. Bruce's translations. It may be said that the Confucian orthodoxy, which is so well known from the time of the Sung dynasty, was fixed by Chü-fu-tze.

Another very important scholar who came to stand in a more independent relation to the Confucian school was Wang Yang-ming. It is all the more necessary to speak of him, because his writings, especially in recent times, have influenced in a remarkable degree the intellectual life of the Orient, in Japan and Korea, as well as in China. Even in America and Europe people have begun to study with interest his practical and deeply inspired works. (Cf. Henke: *The Philosophy of Wang Yang-ming*.)

That he is held in such high regard in Japan is perhaps due to the unique way in which he was able to give to Confucian



thought, and to the religious glow of Buddhism and Taoism, a practical fashioning which well suited a progressive people. For, if there is one thing that characterizes Wang Yang-ming more than anything else, it is the gospel of action. But, be it noted, it is not the foolish action of impulse, or "beating the air", but action based on insight and deep moral conviction. Added to this is the fact that in the early part of his active life he had often to appear in the rôle of warrior, and he was successful in his military operations; this helped greatly to cast a halo of glory about his manly form and noble character.

Wang Yang-ming was born in 1472, in the province of Chekiang, the scion of an old and honoured official family. Throughout his youth he diligently pursued his Confucian studies. At the same time he was an enthusiastic student of the various religious systems, particularly Taoism and Buddhism. He later broke with these. But the new interpretations and additions which he gave to Confucian thought show that these studies in religion exercised a determining influence upon his whole life. At the age of twenty-eight he received his doctorate, and shortly afterward became *Han-lin*, the highest academic distinction. At thirty he received official appointment. When he was thirty-four years old he had already surrounded himself with students, and from now on there are ups and downs, according as he is in favour or disfavour with the higher circles in the capital city.

In 1507 we find him demoted and sent off to the remote province of Kweichow, probably because he could not accommodate himself to "grovelling" before the eunuchs of the palace, as was commonly done. But even at this time, when he went about "as a servant among his sick people, hewed their wood, cooked their food, and cared for them", there was always a song upon his lips.

Wang was later returned to favour, and rose rapidly in rank. He even served as governor in several provinces. He died in 1528, and is buried at Hungch'i near Hangchow. In 1567 he was canonized, and later on the regulation was made that he should be honoured with a special sacrifice immediately after Confucius.

He is the diametrical opposite of the bleak greatness of Chü-fotze. In his psychological studies (in two volumes) he in a very inspiring way gets down into the deeps of consciousness, where the divine touches the human. He has a moving description of intuitive knowledge, which cannot but give birth to "the holy child of thought" (*huai seng-tai*).

It is thus one comes into union with the great law of Heaven. The opposite tendency Wang characterizes as "following cir-

cumstances'' (follow the flesh; *cheu wu*). That is the life of one who is the slave of desire, and it leads to death.

The following statements give Wang's philosophy of life in his own characteristic thought forms:

- (1) The source of the understanding of existence is the understanding of oneself.
- (2) With the right understanding follows the obligation of action.
- (3) Self-knowledge gives birth to the intuitive sense, with the help of which one may penetrate life's deepest relations.

As already indicated, the Confucian scholars became more and more a definite group. The common man looked upon it with reverence; the imperial household and the ruling class with fear, for opposition to tyranny always came first from that direction.

The most outstanding example of such hostility is that of the previously mentioned Emperor Chin-shih-wang (221-209), who united a divided China, and in many other ways earned the gratitude of the country. His hostility led him to the fateful step of gathering and burning all the Confucian literature that he could lay hands on—a crime which in the eyes of the Chinese forever condemned him to the utmost contempt. This caused great confusion among the *literati*, and it took a long, long time before they were able in some measure to gather again the celebrated old textbooks. This event is a main cause of such variations as are found in the Confucian text.

During the dynasty which followed Chin-shih-wang, Confucius and his works attained far greater honour. It was the golden period of the Han dynasty. Intellectual interests received a strong impetus, and Confucius naturally became the centre.

Since that time every succeeding dynasty in China has added to the honours bestowed upon the name and memory of the Master. Emperor Shin-tsung, of the Song dynasty gave him the title of "Emperor". The Ming dynasty named him "The Most Perfect Sage, the Perfect King". Later he was raised to the rank of the gods, entitled to the same honour as the sun and the moon. And finally the last imperial house in China, the Manchurian dynasty of Tsin, elevated him in 1907 to a position beside Heaven and Earth—that is, among the highest objects of worship. At the same time the Mandarins were commanded to worship in his temple, not only on the 15th of each moon, but also on the 1st.

Among the emperors who were specially gripped by the teachings of Confucius, and warmly devoted to the great Master,

Kang-Hsi deserves particular mention. This foremost man of the Manchu dynasty, who did so much for China, is the only emperor who has made a pilgrimage to the grave of Confucius.

He was also the one who wrote a book for that great nation, a book in which the Master's teachings and system should be presented in a clear and popular way for high and low. This was the famous *Sheng-ü*, or *Sacred Ordinances*, a book which was highly regarded in China until the end of the dynasty. It was to be read publicly at certain times round about in the market-places of the cities and on much-travelled roads. Such was the decree.

Special temples were built in honour of Confucius and his most famous disciples. It soon became the proper thing in practice for every district (*shien*) to have its own temple to the great Master. This temple, which is always called the Literary Temple (*Wen-miao*), became a gathering place for all the *literati*. It is distinguished from all the other temples by its simple but dignified style. It is usually surrounded by rich gardens, and lanes of ancient and picturesque trees. The temple itself is without images, for the Great Master and his great disciples should have only tables as memorials.

The chief sacrifices to the Master took place twice a year. Cattle were slain, and the blood sprinkled before the altar. The president of the temple's board of control, one of the oldest and most highly regarded scholars of the place, officiated at the ceremony, and all the *literati* of the region participated with reverential attitude.

The most splendid edifices in honour of Confucius are naturally to be found in the province of Shantung, which contains both his birthplace and his grave.

Next after these comes *Kwo-tze-keen* in Peking, with its six huge monuments. The emperor went twice a year to this temple for worship. He bowed three times, and touched the earth nine times with his head (previously two and six times; cf. the rank of Sun and Moon), after which he addressed Confucius as follows:

"Great art thou, O thou of perfect wisdom. Full is thy virtue, thy doctrine complete. Mortals have never known thine equal. All kings honour thee. Thine ordinances and laws have come down to us in glory. Thou art the model from the school of emperors. With profound reverence the vessels of worship and sacrifice have been placed here. Filled with awe we clash our cymbals and strike our bells."

As his spirit now was considered to be present, the offerings were brought forward: silk, wine, salted tiger flesh, dried fish,



etc., after which the mandarin in charge voiced the following prayer:

"On this — day of the — moon of the year — I, Emperor — sacrifice to the philosopher Kong, the old teacher, the perfect sage, and say: 'O Teacher, like to Heaven and Earth in virtue, whose doctrine embraces past and present, thou didst gather and put forth the Six Classics and produced teachings for all generations. Now in this — moon I present in reverential obedience to the ancient ordinances sacrifices chosen with care—animal offerings, silks, wines, and fruits. With thee are united the philosopher Yen [An], the continuer of thy work; the philosopher Tsang, the interpreter of thy basic teachings; the philosopher Tze-Sze, thine own mediator; and the philosopher Meng [Mencius] next in dignity after thee. Mayst thou be pleased with our offerings!'"

The modern schools of the present, as also some of the officials of the Republic, have introduced a special *kultus*, whereby the tablet or image of Confucius is honoured on state occasions.

In connection herewith should also be mentioned the movement some years ago to make Confucianism the official religion of the republic. The most varied sorts of people united on this plan: unscrupulous politicians, who hoped in this way to regain their old influence; earnest moralists, who thought that the only way to stop the rising tide of immorality was to bring back the iron head of Confucianism; anxious patriots, who through Confucianism hoped to save their country; able economists, who were of the opinion that the "non-religious" Confucian ethic would give China the firm bulwark within, and the beautiful façade without, which would compel the admiration of all.

Great men, influential men, whole groups joined in. There was even a time when China's uncrowned, and later after a fashion crowned emperor, Yuan Shi-Kai, aided the movement, with all the power at his disposal. Add to this that they were able to secure a highly gifted man, ideally adapted to be leader of such a movement, a man brilliantly trained in both Chinese and Western education (Dr. Cheng, a Ph.D. of Columbia University), and it seems almost a miracle that they were not able to carry the plan through.

A powerful propagandist movement was set in motion. It played in every key. Now the chord of patriotism was struck, and again the appeal was that of opportunism. Provincial organizations were formed in the capitals of the provinces, and a central headquarters at Peking, besides local societies all over

the country. Magazines and papers, books and pamphlets were published. Even the Christian method of preaching and lecturing was used. Pilgrimages were arranged to the sacred places in the province of Shantung, where the memories of Confucius were the strongest. Conferences were held. In short, it was clear to all that a mighty movement had been started.

And still it did not reach its goal! The more definitely idealistic and religious elements among the people soon began to react against the plan, that this earthbound ethical system, which with a policy of blood and iron had through the centuries sought to choke all other religious movements (cf. Dr. de Groot's *Sectarianism and Religious Persecutions in China*), should now once more be permitted to lay its cold hand upon the people.

They organized themselves under Christian leadership, in a movement of determined protest. Buddhists, Taoists, Moham-medans, etc., all joined in. They gave unqualified testimony to the perfection of the ethical system of Confucianism, but at the same time they declared it poverty-stricken as a religion. What sense could there be in making it the religion of the state to the exclusion of the real religions?

Soon the daily press was crowded with articles. One saw the new China asserting itself. The majority of the students naturally threw the weight of their influence on the side of freedom of thought. The new educational decree of 1907, abolishing the old examination system, had been doing its work. It may be said with much truth that when the old examination halls with the locked cells were closed, Confucianism ceased to function as the all-dominant intellectual force.

The various parliamentary assemblies tried in vain to force the matter through. It could not be done. Many of the members did not attend—they felt the responsibility too heavy; and so they failed to get quorums.

The whole matter has since been buried in silence. The provincial organizations have been disbanded, and whatever remains of the external machinery is now of purely academic interest.

It is quite another thing that some of modern China's most prominent sons, as, for example, Yen Shi-shan, the famous governor of the province of Shansi, have sought to promote a higher type of reformed Confucianism, which might give to the great "Middle Kingdom" a moral and religious foundation adapted to the new era.

This movement is the more interesting because it is clearly influenced and stimulated both by Christianity and Buddhism.

The connection with the latter is seen not least in the daily periods of meditation, recommended and actually practised by some of the officials belonging to this "school". They are the same methods used in the so-called "Lin-chi School" of Chinese Buddhism. Through meditation one may gain the peace of mind and purity of heart which are so essential to a good official's proper conduct of life. It is particularly emphasized that "the heart be tried"—that is, that one reaches a decision regarding motives and conduct in life.

The connection with Christianity is best seen in the many rules of conduct which are spread among the people in the common educated speech (*Kwanhua*), and which go considerably deeper than the celebrated "Sacred Edict" of Kang-hsi. In addition, there is a new spirit of toleration that shines through it all, and schools and methods which have been introduced by Christian missions are strongly recommended.

#### OBJECTS OF WORSHIP, ACCORDING TO CONFUCIAN THOUGHT

The sketch we have sought to give of Confucianism should have made it clear that it is only in a very limited sense that it can be called a religion. But that there are phases of the Confucian system that belong in the field of religion this concluding section will show.

First we would point to the practice, which developed very early in Confucian society, of substituting impressive readings from ancient classical literature for the clumsy exhibitions of the exorcists—*e.g.*, at funerals. This is called *Han Li* ("proclamation of rules"), and is still used in the homes of the *literati* at weddings, funerals, and other outstanding occasions. Those who carry out this ceremony are always scholars, and they wear a very striking costume for the occasion.

A favourite game among the Confucian *literati* is using the "oracle brush" (planchette) on a tablet covered with sand, or a sheet of thin paper. The brush is suspended by a cord, or fastened to two handles, which are held by two educated men. After the ceremony has been inaugurated with worship and prayer to the spirits they take hold of the handles, and, probably due to the involuntary muscular movements, the brush moves in such a way that characters are formed, which then are interpreted as oracles.

The masses of the people have also got a strong feeling that the disciples of Confucius, from their knowledge of classical literature, have a greater understanding of the laws of being (*Tao*). There is therefore something of religious comfort in having



a scholar in the family, or of near kin. Accordingly, if it is in any way possible, every family tries to make a scholar of one of its members.

In connection herewith may be mentioned the great respect in China for paper on which are written characters. It is by means of the written character that revelation of the great law of being has come to man. These characters are therefore sacred, and paper with writing or printing on it must not be used in a profane way. And so incinerators were provided in every town, and in every community, large or small, especially at bridge-heads and crossroads, where such waste paper might be burned in honour of the gods. One might often see men, who wished to build up a fund of good works or atone for sin, go about with two large baskets, in which they gathered up such waste paper. On the baskets was the inscription: "*Gin-si-tze-chü*—"Venerate and Gather Printed Paper."

There are also mentioned a considerable number of purely Confucian deities and divine powers. Confucianism presents at this point a mixture of nature worship and cult of the dead. It does not properly permit the use of images, only tablets. But a change has taken place in the course of time, and now one often sees the Confucian worthies represented by images. We will now mention the more prominent of the Confucian gods, leaving the many transitional figures from other religions for later treatment.

Along with the solemn worship of *Shang-ti*, the imperial ancestors, heaven and earth, and the earth gods (*sie-tsih*), which form the highest class (*ta-sze*), the ancient sages and emperors also have an important rôle in the Confucian worship. These all come in the second class (*chung-sze*).

Shen-Nung, Fu-shi, Yao, Shun, Huang-ti, etc., all have their special temples.

Sien-tsan, the skilful queen of the twenty-seventh century B.C., was worshipped in the first moon by the empress. It was Sien-tsan who taught the people the culture of the silk-worm.

Of personified nature powers the first and foremost are the four dragons (the water and rain gods), and also *Tien-shen*, the cloud god.

*Ti-si*, the earth gods, are also of considerable importance. Here are classified the ten leading mountains and the five heights, also the four oceans and the four great rivers (Huang-ho, Yangtze, Hai, and Tsi).

Among the astronomical powers that come in this category may be mentioned *Tai-sui*, the great year, which is Jupiter, god of the almanac.

The third class of objects worshipped is called *Kiun-sze*, or collective sacrifices. These are carried out by the mandarins throughout the country.

First come the gods of healing (*sien-i*), the old familiar *Fu-shi*, *Shen-Nung*, and *Huang-ti*. Then the "god of war," *Kwang-Yü*, the grave general of the second and third centuries A.D., of whom more later. Finally, there are the following: *Wen-chang*, a star in the Great Bear constellation, the patron god of literature and the *literati*; *Peh-Chi-Chun*, prince of the North Pole; *Ho-shen*, god of fire; *Ching-hwang-shen*, protector of walls and fortifications; *Tung-yoh-shen*, the god of the Eastern Mountains (Taishan in Shangtung); *Ma-Ten-po*, goddess of the sea; *She-kung-shen*, the god of architecture; *Men-shen*, the gods of gate and door.

Among the duties of the mandarins was that of visiting the temples of these various public deities at certain times of the year (e.g., the birthday of the god), and there performing a solemn act of worship.

There is something exceedingly dry and schematic about the Confucian pantheon, and the ceremonial connected therewith. It is all rather distant from the people. The gods are the gods of the *state*, and the servants of the state (the mandarins) are the ones who take care of the whole matter. No wonder that the people, in spite of the bitterest opposition from the camp of the Confucianists, more and more turned to other religious systems, which with their more popularly arranged temples, and more practical apparatus, were able in a far more effective way to receive the human masses, as they came laden with sin and sorrow, with crime and suffering.

## CHAPTER III

# THE CULT OF ANCESTORS

### ITS BASIS

THE cult of ancestors leads back to the very earliest periods of China's history. Through its natural connection with the animistic system it has also developed a philosophical basis.

Those who live according to the law of being (*Tao*) are to a special degree filled with *Yang*. But that is another way of saying that they become good spirits, or divinities. This can take place even during life. There are accordingly many examples of men becoming the objects of worship while still living (*feng-shen*). But such promotion comes most often after death.

As already shown, the thought was this, that it was not only the dead person's own merit that helped him to a speedy achievement of divine status. The help of others was necessary. These could come to his assistance with worship, magic, and sacrifices, and—most important of all—they could ease the great transition by carrying out all the regulations for the burial.

But so much assistance could not be expected from people unconnected with the deceased. The sons must bear this heavy responsibility. Preferably the own sons from legal marriage, but for want of these the male offspring with a concubine, and even an adopted son, might do. And the son himself, under the influence of the religious thought life about him, soon realized that it was of the utmost significance for him that he lived up to these filial duties, for he would thereby secure his own welfare, his power and his position in society.

In this way the mighty bulwarks were built up which guard the system comprised within the term *Hsiao*—covering not only filial duty and ancestral worship but also an almost religious veneration of all cosmic and celestial authority.

### CONFUCIUS' RELATION TO THE ANCESTOR CULT

Confucius saw quite clearly that in this ancient system of thought lay the vital nerve of society. He therefore made every effort to establish this view among the people of all ranks. Accordingly, in the "Five Relations" the classification "Father and Son" came to occupy a dominant position in his system

(cf. publication of the *Hsiao-ching*). Here was a point about which the whole people might concentrate their worship, something far more real and significant for society than all the doubtful exorcism which took so much of the people's time and energy.

Nor did his disciples weary of dwelling upon the same theme. Take a man like Mencius—how has he not lavished his intellectual power and his boldness of style upon this subject! From him comes the well-known word: "The worst form of filial impiety is not to have sons."

And so it is actually understood in China. It is not only unfilial, but it is the height of misfortune not to have sons. Therefore it is the definite duty of parents to secure a wife for their son as soon as possible, and it is her sacred obligation to bring male offspring into the world. "For a family without sons is like a tree cut off at the roots."

The line of thought is evident: the sonless one has no one to assure him a burial which will in any measure secure his happiness in the other world; he has none who, by caring for the fixed sacrifice and ceremonies of worship, can make him safe from degradation in the life after death. It is a sin.

Then comes the more philosophical aspect of the matter: it is through continuous propagation that the world order continues in its course. To withdraw at this point is in a special degree to sin against Heaven (*pei tien*).

We shall now see in its main divisions how the official religion, Confucianism, makes regulations regarding (1) burial, (2) worship in the home, (3) the annual sacrifices at the grave, and (4) worship in the ancestral hall.

### BURIAL

As soon as serious sickness breaks into a home the son buys one or more coffins for the parents. He may already have done it long in advance of this, to show his filial regard for his loved ones, and to give the old folks a feeling of safety.

After death comes the painstaking washings of the corpse. This is then clothed in the required garments; the coffin is lined with paper; fine lime is placed in between to guard against dampness; and a number of other precautions are observed.

With unkempt hair, and dressed in rough clothing, the son goes to the nearest stream. Here, between two lighted candles, he makes offering of wine and paper money to the deceased. This is to help him on his first dark journey through the river of death, and is popularly called *Kai sha*.



Before the coffin there are sacrifices and ceremonies of worship every day for seven days. These are directed first of all to the soul elements, which are thought still to be near the bier, but also to the body and the even lower elements (*pai*).

In the meantime there is a stream of friends, relatives and connections, who come to show their sympathy. They are met with smiles, and they smile in return, for their sorrow is not really to have free course before the funeral. All bring gifts, mostly scrolls with eulogies of the deceased, or even more commonly, gold and silver paper in various shapes representing gold or silver ingots. These "valuables" are then burned, and their value is transferred through fire and smoke to the other world.

That Confucianism's dry and formal regulations do not satisfy the religious needs of the Chinese is seen not least in the funerals, and what is connected with them. Everywhere the Confucian rules are supplemented by exorcism, and later also by the many ceremonies of Taoism and Buddhism. Thus the entrance of death into a house is proclaimed in Taoist fashion by hanging a paper rooster up over the house; and the Confucian ceremonies of worship are usually supplemented by the solemn masses for the dead, carried out by Buddhist priests (*Tsao tao-chang*).

In addition, the message of death is brought to relatives and friends by sending out special cards. These are usually blue in colour, and sometimes grey, depending on whether it is father or mother, and according to the time elapsed.

Careful choice is made of the day for the funeral. The best diviners must be consulted, for the welfare of the dead and also of the living depends on right choice of time.

The place must be chosen with no less care. Considerable time may often elapse before they permit themselves to decide upon a definite place for the grave. When there is such delay it is usually because several experts have been seen, and these have given differing opinions. Meanwhile the coffin remains in the home, out in the open, or in a room for that purpose in one of the temples.

When a place with good *feng-shui* (laws of wind-and-water) has finally been found, and the appointed day has come, people gather in the bereaved house for the funeral. The nearest relatives, and especially the sons, are dressed in long grey-white garments of coarse cotton cloth. About the waist is a straw belt, on the feet straw sandals, tied on with grey canvas. The staff carried in the hand is wound with the same materials, straw and canvas, and the head covering is of a similar kind. The

more distant relatives appear in white garments. The son, or sons, have often fasted in preparation for the day. The professional mourners appear in numbers, and perform their mourning act with great precision.

As the funeral procession leaves the home there is a short ceremony of worship. The coffin is then lifted by the many hired bearers amid cries and shouting; strings of firecrackers are set off, and the band, which has been called in for the purpose, fills the air with clashing music. Many banners and tablets of blue or white are carried in procession, and on these are inscriptions which relate in most eloquent style the great services of the deceased. If it is a personage of some rank who is buried there are likely to be people waiting along the way, and as the procession passes they get down with faces to the ground, present still more tablets, and set off firecrackers or burn paper money in honour of the dead. An incredible amount of paper money is spread upon the way as the procession moves forward.

On the day of the funeral the eldest or youngest son often goes around to the homes of the relatives, dressed in the manner described, in order to "show filial piety and sorrow." With sorrowful countenance and gestures he goes up to the door, led by a companion. This one lays a mat on the ground for him, upon which he kneels and strikes his forehead three times upon the ground.

According to the classical regulations there are really five different mourning costumes to be worn, but in practice it has come down to the two described. Signs of mourning shall also be worn after the funeral: during the first period a white button in the cap, and a strip of white braided into the queue while this was still worn, and also white shoes. Later on the white was to be exchanged for blue.

#### WORSHIP IN THE HOME

As we have now given a rather condensed description of the burial, we pass on to the subject of worship in the home. For, according to Confucian thought, one is never through with the dead. What follows will show that in a certain sense the descendants live mainly to serve the dead. So it is reiterated over and over in Confucian literature, that the body I have, and my home and property, belong not to me, but to my parents and ancestors.

The matter of first importance is to carry out the great ceremony of worship which comes in the period immediately after the funeral, when the spirit tablet has been prepared. Accord-

ing to the official religion these ceremonies are to be performed by *literati* called in for the purpose. These, dressed in ceremonial robes, with genuflections and kneeling, chant passages from the classics (*Han-li*) before the tablet. The practice has developed, however, of having in addition, or instead of this ceremony, masses for the soul chanted by Buddhist priests or Taoist exorcists (*Tsao-tao-chang*). The mass begins usually at sunset, and is not finished until late at night. Temporary altars are put up in the main room of the home. Idols in the form of scrolls are hung about the room. The priests in their ceremonial robes stand before these, and partly chant and partly read the order of the mass, with rolls on the drum and blasts from the trumpet at intervals pealing out into the darkness of the night.

The more such masses one can afford to have, the more certain one can be that the dead will come through well.

The next step is to provide house, clothing, bed, etc., for the use of the deceased in the other world. If he is a person of rank, more is needed to satisfy the wants he had in this world: slaves, concubines, etc. But everything may be procured from the outfitter—made of paper! Whole loads of these things are taken out to a place in the open. Here they are burned, while a *Tao-yen*, employed for the purpose, or a Buddhist priest, provides for their transfer to the other side, dancing around the fire while at its height, with clashing cymbals, and again bowing down in worship (*Tsao ling-o-tse*).

Needless to say, huge sums of money are squandered in this way. But the greatest sacrifices are made to prevent the terrible misfortune that the dead should, on account of the neglect of the living, join the army of demons and become what the Chinese call a *Kiang-shi*, a terrible avenging demon spirit.

The height of devotion to the dead is the willingness to follow the departed by voluntary suicide. In the earliest times this happened frequently, though probably not always voluntarily, as slaves were killed in order that they might follow their master. In modern times it is chiefly widows who in this way show their affection. Special memorials are raised at the graves of such, and emperors have often built memorial arches in their honour.

We have mentioned the first main ceremony of worship after the funeral. The second main ceremony of this kind follows after a hundred days, the third and fourth on the birthday, and the fifth at the end of twenty-seven months. This properly marks the end of the period of mourning, the deceased being then transferred to the great company of ancestors, for whom

there are the daily and annual memorial services. But the birthday is long observed as a special day of mourning.

Sons who are officials in the public service must, in case of the death of one of their parents, withdraw from the service for three years to "observe mourning".

As we now proceed to deal more in particular with the common, daily ancestor worship, we will first give some description of the Chinese home.

The natural order of rank is this: The father is the unquestioned head of the house. His wife is subject to him. But as she becomes the mother of sons she acquires considerable authority. This is greatly increased as the sons marry, for their wives are her servants.

The eldest son, by reason of being the first born, is the superior of his younger brothers. His wife has a corresponding position in respect of the younger brothers' wives. The children of the eldest and those of the younger brothers are regarded as brothers and sisters, and are named by number, according to the time they came into the world.

The ideal arrangement, according to the Chinese way of thinking, is that these shall all hold together, and live in the same home. And so, where poverty or strife has not got the upper hand, one may see them living together in this way in the most patriarchal fashion. Particularly in the country one may see these extensive homes, either as entire villages, or as large groups of buildings with walls around them. In this last-named form they are often a beautiful sight, with bamboo and other groves in the background, and surrounded with a high, whitewashed wall.

As you enter through the gatehouse you come into a large court with a lotus pond in the middle. The buildings are in the form of a quadrangle, with the main building in the centre. Here facing the main entrance is the large guest room of the common home (*Tao-o*).

This is at once the guest room (reception room) and the ancestral hall and sanctuary of the home. Therefore the large wall cabinet, which stands on an ordinary high cabinet, occupies the chief place. This sacred cabinet is often beautifully carved, and is fitted with shelves, but has a rather large and deep niche. In this are placed the spirit tablets of the dead ancestors (those of the nearest generation). The tablet is of wood, flat and rectangular, with a broad flat moulding at the top. On the moulding and on the tablet itself are inscribed the name and the years of birth and death. The tablet is consecrated by a mystical act at the time of receiving it from the maker, as



well as during the ceremony mentioned in connection with the funeral. The oldest tablets are moved into the ancestral hall of the clan as new deaths occur in the family.

Here at the home altar is concentrated the whole religious life of the average Chinese. This is in agreement with the system of thought which Confucius and his school championed. The Confucian influence is also seen in the presence at the back of the niche of a large plain tablet, or a large sheet of red paper pasted there, upon which these five significant characters are inscribed: Heaven, Earth, Emperor,<sup>1</sup> Government, and Teacher (*Tien, Ti, Chün, Fo, Si-Wei*). Together with the previously mentioned Five Relations among men (*Wu Lun*), these five characters represent the fixed points of all existence. These great forces of the universe are therefore worshipped together with the ancestors. In the sacred cabinet is concentrated the eternal law of being (*Tao*). No wonder that this home altar has a high place in the consciousness of the Chinese.

The daily worship, including that of the ancestors, takes place morning and evening, the father, or the oldest son who is at home, officiating. A little step-ladder is brought, enabling him to reach the protruding lower shelf of the cabinet. The candles and sticks of incense are lighted. A little bell is rung, by which the attention of the ancestral spirits is invited, and the paper money is burned. As the smoke ascends he bows three times. Then the candles and incense are placed before the tablets. Again the one officiating gets down and bows three times before the sacred cabinet. The concluding act is to prostrate himself three times, striking his forehead upon the ground. At the morning worship the presentation of rice, wine, vegetables, and pieces of meat or fish often takes the place of burning paper money. It is placed in small dishes before the tablet, and after a while removed.

Hand in hand with this ceremony before the ancestral tablets goes the daily placing of sticks of incense outside the door, or in the crack of the door. It is usually the youngest son who performs this ceremony. He is thereby to be trained in worship. This act of worship is largely a safety provision. Heaven, the spirits of the ancestors, and all the good genii of the universe are hereby petitioned for help and protection for the coming night or day, against the host of demons. Here we have, in fact, one of the few more definite prayers to "Heaven". Therefore the ceremony is to be performed out under the open sky.

<sup>1</sup> Now the word *Chün*, Emperor, Highest Ruler, is interpreted to represent the idea of the Republic, personified by the President.

We cannot well leave this discussion of the daily worship without briefly pointing out the religious confusion which also characterizes the home altar. In very few homes are they content to place only the ancestral tablets in the sacred cabinet. In most cases a whole group of little images (house gods) are placed close beside the tablets. Those who have this favoured place are apt to be *Kwang-yin*, Goddess of Mercy, from the Buddhist pantheon, and *Tsai-shen*, God of Wealth, and *Kwan Lao-je*, God of War, from among the leading figures of Taoism. There can be little doubt that this worthy trinity often receives the greater part of the worship. The many scrolls hung, and paper bands pasted on the walls, covered with mystic symbols and figures, give plenty of evidence that the Taoist minions, private firms of exorcists, and Buddhist monks have been around.

#### THE ANNUAL SACRIFICES AT THE GRAVE

In addition to the main funeral ceremony, and the worship of ancestors in the home, the annual sacrifices at the grave also occupy a prominent place.

The grave, usually in the form of a horseshoe, is finished by those who can afford it with a framework of masonry, and surrounded by massive grill work of the same material. Stone monuments, with the name of the deceased, and the dates of birth and death, are also put up at the grave. If the clan is wealthy, memorial arches are raised, both at the grave and in other prominent places. Emperors and those of highest rank in the country have built massive mausoleums for their dead. The poor content themselves with an ordinary high mound for the grave, which often has a little "earthen cap" at the top. Some simply set the casket on the ground and brick it up, or cover it with a thick layer of plaster or cement.

The clan has a common cemetery, and sometimes more than one if the clan is large. These cemeteries are charted, and copies of the chart are kept in the ancestral hall, as well as by the individual families. Besides these there are a number of craft guilds and similar organizations which have common burial places. And then in most communities there are public burial grounds where the poor and the newcomers may bury their dead.

In the case of sorrow and danger threatening the family it is quite common to have special sacrifices and worship at the graves. This is done also when there are important decisions to be made, and in the early period following burial.

But worship at the grave is generally limited to the two great festivals, Spring and Autumn.

Of these, again, the Festival of Spring (*Ching-ming Chie*), in March or April, is the more important. It is called *Ching-ming* ("Pure and Bright"), and plays a real part in Chinese social life. For when this festival has come, all who can possibly get away must go home to the ancestral burial places, even if it is ever so far away. And so there is an immense pilgrimage, to the mountains and over the plains, to the places where the graves are to be found.

For days they gather out among the graves. Fresh earth is filled on the mound, necessary repairs made, and the grave mounds decorated with waving strips of paper. A remarkable new life comes over these gloomy mounds during this time, for wherever one turns these waving white strips are to be seen. And every now and then there is a crash of gunfire or of fire-crackers.

The sacrifice itself consists of a libation of wine at the foot of the grave, or on the flat stone which constitutes the altar. The sacrificial act is accompanied with genuflections, made either standing or kneeling.

At the Autumn Festival, in September or October, the same ceremonies are repeated, only that the paper strips are not used. Nor is there anything like the same participation.

In this connection must be mentioned the widespread fear of levelling old graves. It is a duty, and also a very meritorious act, to save disappearing graves from oblivion by putting up a little stone, with the inscription *ko-fen* (ancient grave) on it. Accordingly it is considered the most shameful of all shameful acts to obliterate graves—*e.g.*, by building projects.

It is therefore easy to understand how China has through the centuries become dotted with graves. No sight is more common than that of burial mounds, and it may truly be said that there is less and less room for the living, as the harvest of death continues.

#### THE WORSHIP IN THE ANCESTRAL HALL

It is not only the individual family which has to care for the worship of the ancestors. The clan as such (*tsou*) also has its serious obligations in this regard.

Clan organization plays a very significant part in China even from ancient times. The common clan name, which also becomes the name of the individual families, is the outward symbol of the common relationship. Each clan increases in numbers and power according to conditions. Membership in a powerful clan gives good support in a society whose conditions are not too easy for the individual. But it also entails obligations. One must subject oneself to the regulations of the clan.

If not, the elders of the clan can mete out punishments whose severity does not fall short of those of the State. I have often seen in China that the elders of the clan stepped in and administered the severest punishments, even to death by strangling or drowning, where the State through its officials did nothing.

The chief meeting place of the clan is in the main Ancestral Hall (*Tsong tsü-tang*). It is built with funds raised by apportionment upon the members of the clan. Such ancestral halls are often wealthy, with ownership of great tracts of rice fields. In the hall is a roll of all the members. There are also many shelves and niches where the tablets can be placed as they are removed from the homes. The halls vary in size, all the way from large groups of buildings down to insignificant little houses.

The common arrangement is that of a front entrance hall, with an inner hall furnished with altar and complete equipment for the worship and tablets, and then a number of smaller rooms for kitchen and sleeping places. The front hall is used mostly as a dining-room at the great festivals. In most cases the caretaker, who is usually a member of the clan, lives in a small house beside the hall.

Besides the elders of the clan, keepers of accounts are elected at intervals, whose duty it is to present statements covering the common property, the festivals, upkeep, etc.

Occasionally a committee from among the clan's *literati* is appointed to revise the membership roll and bring it down to date (*tsieu po*).

In addition to the great central hall there are often erected a number of more local ancestral halls as the membership increases. These are called branches (*chü-tang*). They have their own administration and arrangements similar to the mother hall.

The ancestral hall serves as the meeting place of the clan when matters of common interest are to be decided. It is the depository of the ancestral tablets. Most important of all, it is the common meeting place of the clan for its worship; it is the clan's sanctuary. Quite significantly, it is in a number of places called "temple" (*miao*).

Twice a year they gather here for the sacrifices, at the winter and summer solstices. Every family is then obliged to send one or two of its members as participants. In case of neglect to do this, the elders of the clan may mete out punishment. They come in festive apparel, and with evident satisfaction give themselves up to this pleasant break in the monotony of everyday life. They eat together, and, if the hall is large enough, a sufficient number of beds are arranged so that they can live together.



The most important element, however, is the chief sacrifice, which the elders of the clan place upon the altar with many genuflexions and kneelings. It consists of the best of the flock, slaughtered for the occasion, together with a tray filled with fine foods and wine.

Large candles burn; the air is filled with the fragrance of incense; and gunfire and exploding firecrackers make a grand noise in the room. The otherwise impressive scene, when the chief of the elders in a high chanting voice calls upon the spirits of the ancestors to grant protection and favour to all the members of the clan, is spoiled by all the noise and confusion.

Now and then a theatrical troop is employed for the occasion, and these give a display of their art upon a stage erected for the purpose. This is regarded as a special honour to the ancestors.

After four or five days together they depart, homeward bound, and the ancestral hall again stands empty and deserted for months.

## CHAPTER IV

### TAOISM

#### INTRODUCTION

It might be taken for granted that the Chinese, with their peculiar disposition and character, could not be entirely content with the cold ethical system which Confucius championed. It was but one side of the Chinese racial spirit which found in him its supreme representative.

The other important side, the desire for deeper religious thought and the urge toward a holy mysticism, found its fulfilment in another personality, and in a quite different thought system. This personality is *Laotze*, and the system is that which in the narrower sense is called Taoism—*i.e.*, the Taoism immediately connected with the name of *Laotze*.

The remarkable thing is that both of these two greatest sons of China drank from essentially the same spring. When the vastly different results are contemplated one begins to realize something of the richness and variety of the thought material which lies hidden in China's ancient literary productions.

The author of the *Tao-Teh-Ching* towers like a lonely peak among his contemporaries, and he has since stood as the great solitary in the religious life of China. For no one has risen to such bold flights of thought or such emancipated spiritual greatness as his. But although no one equalled him, his personality and his thought system have with a magnetic power attracted the more liberated thinkers. His name therefore became a watchword for all those who in the course of time felt the urge to free themselves from the yoke which Confucianism had laid upon society.

And so there developed that which in the religious life of China is the saddest of all things sad: the loftiest system, containing much sacred mysticism, and many eternal religious truths, is little by little dragged down into the mire, and confused to such a degree that in the course of some centuries it becomes almost unrecognizable.

As regards the historical background, the picture given of conditions at the time of Confucius holds good here.

## LAOTZE

The deeper religious speculation which found its main inspiration in the doctrine of Tao had its occasional devotees down through the centuries. During the most flourishing period of the Han dynasty this devotion to the doctrine of Tao greatly increased. And, since Buddhism had organized itself and shown the way, there followed about 200 A.D. a formal organization of Taoism into a religious society (*chiao*).

It then became necessary to point out the movement's first and greatest spokesman, and there did not long remain any doubt under whose patronage it should place itself—namely, that of Laotze. And so without his knowledge, and long, long after his death, he was proclaimed the father of Taoism.

According to the popular tradition, the date of Laotze's birth is commonly given as 604 B.C. His father was a farmer, probably living in the eastern part of Honan province, near the present Kweitehfo. Here in the village of Ko-in ("Suppressed benevolence"), in the county of Li ("Cruelty"), in the district of Ku ("Bitterness"), in the state of Tsao ("Suffering")—here it was that Laotze was born. Some prominent sinologues of late (as Dr. Wilhelm) have advanced the theory that Laotze's birthplace is to be sought much more to the south, near the Yangtse river.

In a remarkable way these place names coincide with that background of suffering out of which China's greatest and most original philosopher came.

His father did not marry before the age of seventy, and with a woman about half his own age.

Laotze's family name was Li (plum tree). His childhood name was E'r (ear—perhaps on account of his long ears). His scholar name was Pen Yang, and his official name T'an. The name Laotze was later bestowed upon him as a title of honour. It means literally "Old Son", or "Old Boy". Here, however, it is used as a title of reverence—"The Eldest"—i.e., "the Wisest One", the Master. Legend has given a different explanation: he is said to have been born an old man, eighty-one years of age, and with long grey hair!

While we have quite accurate knowledge of the life of Confucius, the opposite is the case with Laotze. We have only a few scattered bits of traditional lore about him from the Chinese historian Sze Ma-chien (d. 85 B.C.). These are also of a legendary character.

There is no information about Laotze's childhood and youth. We first hear of him as an official at the imperial court

(Chou dynasty). He was keeper of the archives and state historian. This tells us a good deal, for it shows us that he must in a special degree have been well at home in the ancient literature, and already highly regarded as a thinker in the active years of his manhood.

The well-known incident, of Confucius undertaking a long journey in order to meet the great sage, points in the same direction. Confucius was then quite a young man, just beginning his course. Laotze was an old man of eighty-eight, and the peace and clarity of an autumn day lay over his whole being.

The bits of that conversation which are preserved are very significant. Confucius unfolds his plans of reform with all the fire and enthusiasm of youth. Laotze replies with great dignity: "Discard your proud airs, your many demands and extravagant ways; it will all profit you nothing."

When Confucius returned to his disciples and told them of his meeting with Laotze, he said: "I know how birds can fly, fish swim, and animals run. Birds can be shot, fish caught in nets, and animals in snares. But how is it with the dragon? I cannot explain how it rises with the wind and mounts up toward the sky.—Today I have seen Laotze, and I can only compare him with the dragon."

Tradition also tells of a later meeting between the two sages. Altogether there were many disciples who gathered about Laotze. It was shortly after the last meeting with Confucius that he sought to be relieved of his position at the court of Chou.

He had tried to oppose the steadily rising tide of corruption; he had inveighed against injustice and oppression; he had himself led the way with pure ethic, with mercy and generosity. It had all brought him only trial and pain, while the distress of land and people became worse and worse. Now in the evening of his life he felt it his right to withdraw from his official duties before the abomination of desolation really broke loose.

We see him then for a time at home, steadily thinking and meditating upon life's deepest problems. But when war, banditry and lawlessness threatened to destroy even the home, he forms the great resolution to start out upon a pilgrimage toward the west. He wishes to go to the far west, about which wonderful stories were told even in the land of Sinim. Accompanied only by a servant he starts out.

It is in this westward journey that he comes to the mountain pass of Hanku, west of Loyang, where there was a military outpost and customs station at that time.

As the customs officer Yin Hsi catches sight of Laotze in the



distance, it suddenly comes over him that this great sage is now for ever leaving the country which he has so faithfully served. He thinks of the treasure of philosophy and lofty teaching which would thereby be lost to posterity.

Immediately the noble-minded mandarin forms the resolution to invite Laotze to dwell with him as his guest. In that way he may be able to prevail upon the sage to write out the main points of his teaching before he proceeds on his way.

As Laotze approaches the gate, riding upon his water buffalo (*sui-niu*), Yin Hsi prostrates himself humbly before him, and with much persuasion succeeds in getting the old philosopher to enter the house. Here the tea is already poured out. (This is the first time that tea is mentioned as a guest drink in China!')

As reward for the hospitality shown him, Laotze then commits to writing here the main content of the philosophic system which he has constructed through the years. Thus it happened, says Sze Ma-chien, that the *Tao-Teh-Ching*, the marvellous Bible of Taoism, was written.

There is otherwise little to relate about Laotze's stay at the pass. One thing is added—that he had an unpleasant settlement with his servant Seu-ke, who refused to accompany him farther. Yin Hsi's mediation helped to bring about an agreement.

The parting follows immediately: a cloud came and enveloped the aged form—and he was gone for ever.

This has been a favourite subject with Chinese painters. This picture is therefore often seen on the walls in the homes: "The Ascension of Laotze" it is frequently called.

Concerning Laotze's descendants, tradition has it that his son Tsung later became a general in the state of Wei.

#### THE SOURCES OF TAOISM

It is very important to realize clearly the sources of Taoism. As already mentioned, these are in large part the same as the basic documents of Confucianism: the ancient literary collections of Shu-ching, Sih-ching, Yi-ching and Li-chi. As might be expected, the Yi-ching, with its bold speculation and combinations, became a leading source for Taoism.

But Laotze himself quite certainly had more material to build with. As keeper of the archives he may also have met with fragments of Western writings.

As regards the ancient Chinese literature, Laotze is much freer than Confucius. One element, however, they have in

<sup>1</sup> An indication of the late date of the story.

common; both build upon the doctrine of Tao. Especially with Lao-tze the concept has been given a statement which is quite remarkable.

But the deepest source of all is the bubbling spring with which God Himself had endowed the interesting author of the *Tao-Teh-Ching*. And it is just because this spring welled up so richly that he appears so unique, and that his system far surpasses all other Chinese thinking.

### "TAO-TEH-CHING"

We now go over to the consideration of the famous book about *Tao* (The Way, The Law of Life), and about *Teh* (Virtue)—*Tao-Teh-Ching*. Many modern Chinese scholars hold that the *Tao-Teh-Ching* was compiled at the earliest shortly after the time of Mencius and that its present form is of still later date. The name Lao Tai is perhaps best regarded as an alternative title to the book. (Among translations I would highly recommend that which is found in Dr. Julius Grill's book: *Lao-Tze's Buch vom Höchsten Wesen und vom Höchsten Gut*.) Certainly all of the numerous writings which by later admirers are credited to him are shown by careful investigation to belong to a far later period.

The book is made up of two parts, containing together 5,000 words. It seems to be understood that before he wrote the book Lao-tze reviewed his philosophical system orally with Yin Hsi. This had the advantage that it was not then necessary to write down more than the propositions. But it was a loss for those who came after them, for much of it thereby becomes obscure, and the grossest misinterpretations have been the result. *Tao-Teh-Ching* will always remain a very difficult book to interpret. One need only refer to the various translations into European languages!

The two parts of the book, of which the first deals with "Tao" and the second with "Teh", are divided into 81 chapters.

The first part develops in 37 chapters the essence of Tao and its forms of manifestation: "Tao", or the law of being, is from eternity. It can be conceived only by those who do not nourish evil desires.—Through Tao all things are given life and form. Invisible, and yet real; undiscoverable to the senses, and yet permeating all things.

The very first paragraph of *Tao-Teh-Ching* carries one into a mystical, lofty religious mood, to which no parallel is found in any of the other writings of China's ancient literature. The first chapter is in translation as follows:

The Tao which can be named is not the real, eternally existing Tao. The name which can be spoken is not the real, eternally existing name. Without name Tao is the source of heaven and earth; with a name it furnishes the principle of world development (or, named, it is mother of the All).

Therefore (it is stated), only he who is constantly pure from desire will be able completely to penetrate its deep mystery. He who constantly bears desire within him will only glimpse its outer circumference.

These two aspects (of Tao) have together produced the universe, but only the one aspect can be named. Both aspects must be designated *The Unfathomable*, yea, as the universal gate of the miraculous.

In the fourth chapter we also read: The *Tao* is void, and yet, using it (one experiences) that it is never exhausted. O how deep and unfathomable it is! It is, as it were, the source of all things!—It breaks the keenness of its own sharp edge, comes forward out of the shadowy fulness of its own being, accommodates its own glowing brightness, and adapts itself to the conditions of the dust.—How pure and silent it is! It must be of the nature of eternal being!—I know not whose son it is. It seems to precede God Himself.

In the twenty-second chapter Lao-tze quotes an old proverb, and combines it with his own words:

He who knows his own imperfection is on the road to perfection.

The one who does not insist on his own rights will win justice.

He who regards himself as empty possesses the real and true fullness.

The one who knows himself grown old is on the road to renewal of life.

He who thinks he possesses all experiences the great disillusionment.

Of special importance is also the twenty-fifth chapter, wherefore we quote it in full:

There is something indefinite, and still completed. It existed before heaven and earth. It is calm and incorporeal. It stands alone and unchanging. It permeates all. It may be regarded as the mother of the universe.

I know not its name, but term it *Tao*. If I be compelled to designate it more particularly, I can only say "The Great".—The Great I call The Advancing; The Advancing I call

The Distant; The Distant I call The Recurring. Therefore *Tao* is great, heaven is great, earth is great, and the king is great. The king is one among them. Man obeys the laws of the universe; the universe obeys heaven; but *Tao* goes according to its own laws. (The "King" is here "the ideal man".)

Chapters 30 and 31 have strong expressions against war. "After victories there should be kept days of mourning." From Chapter 13: "Both fortune and misfortune should be received with fear." "We should look upon the world's suffering and distress as we regard our own members—with sincere compassion."

"When a king regards his people as his own body, then only is he a real king."

#### Chapter 33:

He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened.

He who controls others is strong; he who controls himself is mighty.

He that is content with what he has is rich.

He that acts energetically (against himself) has will power.

He who does not leave his calling (under difficult conditions) will maintain himself through long years.

He that loses his life without being destroyed has eternal life.

#### Chapter 34:

The great *Tao*! With what blessed results it reaches out, both to right and to left; all is called to life by its activity, and it forgets no one.—When its work is done it makes no demand for recognition. It loves and nourishes all creation, and still does not demand the right to rule.

It harbours no selfish desires; therefore we may call it the least among the inconspicuous.

All creation returns to it (at last), and yet it is never arbitrary.—Therefore we may call it the greatest of all that is great.—Hence it is that the saints, who to the very end do not regard themselves as great, achieve true greatness.

From the second part, which deals with *Teh* (virtue), we present some of the main thoughts. *Teh* is represented as the practical expression of *Tao*.

Much that is beautiful is said about humility. There are illustrations from the heavens and the heavenly bodies: when they have done their part they leave without boasting (as the sun



and moon). Likewise water: it flows ever onward, nourishing and refreshing; it does not stop to admire its work. "Therefore," he adds, "when you have done your socially beneficent work, then withdraw quietly!" How beautifully Laotze's life matched these words!

Of very special interest is Chapter 52, which with all its obscurity seems to point forward toward the New Testament revelation:

The origin of the world inspires thoughts of the cosmic mother (*Tao*). If we know the son, and thereby lay hold on the mother (*Tao*), we shall not perish, even though our bodies are destroyed. If we act according to the eternal principle we gain a wide outlook and become strong, being enabled to achieve (gain insight into) the least, and to move the gentle.

From Chapter 50: The knowledge of *Tao* is the secret of life. *Tao* is the only cure for corruption and death.

From Chapter 66: It is good for a person to hold himself back in the beginning; he will the more easily reach the foremost ranks. The reason that the sea is king (*i.e.*, the great gathering place) of the many rivers and streams, is that it occupies the lowest place.

Chapter 72: The saintly man knows himself, but does not exhibit himself. He considers himself too precious, without therefore wishing to honour himself.

Chapter 76: Man is at birth gentle and weak; at death hardened and stiff. All things (grass, trees, etc.) are at first soft and tender, and at death hard and weatherbeaten. Hardness and severity are therefore the companions of death; tenderness and gentleness, of life.

We must also mention the grand saying: "Repay evil with good." Here he far surpasses Confucius, and also all other non-Christian religious systems.

#### LAOTZE'S USE OF THE WORD "TAO"

Laotze's whole philosophy of life is based on the pregnant conception of *Tao*. He uses the word with different meanings, and in highly varied connections, in order that the several phases of *Tao* may be the more clearly expressed.

He is specially fond of translating the expression into figurative language, such as, "the cosmic mother", "the root", etc.

Most remarkable, however, is his conception of the relationship of *Tao* to God (*Shang-ti* or *T'ien*). He states it thus: "I know not whose son *Tao* is: it seems to come before God." In

other places it seems that Laotze simply uses the word *Tao* for God.

One thing is at any rate certain: the purely abstract use of the word which we constantly find in the earliest Chinese writings has with Laotze stepped more into the background. It is the same with the theories of *Yang* and *Ying*. Instead, *Tao* has become the great all-controlling principle, with something of the spark of personality in it. (Cf. Chapter 34, where it is even stated that "*Tao* loves and nourishes all creation".)

Although Laotze was familiar as no one else with ancient literature and ceremonial, one gets the distinct impression that his attitude toward it all is very free. Nor did he have any faith in the business of law-making. In both these respects he contrasts with Confucius.

His originality is specially noticeable in his brief observations regarding the story of creation. Instead of speaking about the absolute point of origin (*Taichih*), he says in Chapter 42: "*Tao* creates the one. This one (other) creates the two, and the two create the three, the three create all things. All things contain *Ying* and embrace *Yang*. These unite harmoniously through *Chi* (or life force)."

This curious allusion to a trinity, as that which creates all, has given rise to the opinion that the idea of the Trinity may be found suggested in *Laotze's* thought. Otherwise the symbolism of the number three also plays a considerable part in his system. Cf. Chapter 14, where he speaks about *the invisible Yi*, *the soundless Hi*, and *the immovable Wei*.

#### STATEMENTS ABOUT MAN

Laotze is specially fond of dwelling upon the starry heavens. The various constellation figures were quite real to him (e.g., the Bull and the Bear).

Likewise the Dragon and the other monsters, with which the Chinese ancient period had furnished the earth, were realities.

According to his statements, the order of his ranking is: Heaven, Earth, Spirits, and the lower spirits and "things"—i.e., living things.

The "King" is always named as the representative of man. Man stands above all animals. Therefore he is able to control even the most ferocious beasts of prey with his eye.

He divides the human family into two classes: *First class*—(1) *Hsien-jen*: saints; (2) *tsung-tsu*: philosophers; and (3) *Shi*, or *Ta tsung-fu*: talented people.

"Saints" are mentioned first, for they are the great examples

for the race. In them the *Tao* reveals its nature. Laotze gives it as his own aim in life to make all men saints.

"Philosophers" are not so perfect, as they are only partially permeated by *Tao*. But these may also be examples for men.

The "Talented" can help others to gain knowledge and insight, without, however, being able to offer an example of living worthy of being followed.

In the second class we have (1) *Peh-sin*, or *Ming*, the common people. They live a life in ignorance, given to boasting, greed, and empty pleasures. But lowest of all are the many who have descended even to the level of criminals; (2) *Tautsei* (robbers), as they are called.

Among these ignorant and deep-sunken people of the second class the "Saints", "Philosophers", and "Talented" ones are to work, that all may be filled with *Tao*, and receive strength for virtue (*Teh*). As a scarlet thread this thought runs through the whole: Have a heartfelt compassion for the people!

That which distinguishes man from animals, according to Laotze's system, is intelligence. And intelligence is conceived as a combination of knowledge and thought. Several chapters of *Tao-Teh-Ching* are devoted to this subject of apprehension as the chief element of consciousness. That which we mainly find to be lacking, in the light of modern psychology, is a proper recognition of the other elements, will and emotion. From a deeper viewpoint, however, it is characteristic of Laotze's system of thought not to touch upon these. His whole pantheistic and deterministic outlook forbade him to give the will and emotion any considerable place.

Neither is the earthly existence, according to Laotze, man's real life. Both before birth and after death the stream of life goes ever on, for the individual as well as for the race. His words in Chapter 50 are famous: "The departure is life; the homecoming is death." If the question of immortality is raised in this connection, the answer is: He who is absorbed in *Tao* has eternal life.

#### LAOTZE'S INFLUENCE

The quotations that have been given from *Tao-Teh-Ching* will show that it is with a good deal of justice that Laotze's philosophy has been characterized as an oriental *Neo-Platonism*. The old sage of China, who was, according to tradition, a contemporary of the Greek Pythagoras, has in many respects reached the same conclusions as the Neo-Platonists, even though from quite a different approach.

Did this remarkable book and its remarkable philosophy gain any considerable influence? Not in the beginning.

With regard to influence upon the masses, the answer is self-evident: the system of thought was on so high a level that it would necessarily be limited to a smaller circle. It was only much later that Taoism was made available to the masses, and then, be it noted, in a form which had little in common with original Taoism.

But if Laotze's teachings did not permeate masses, this was compensated for by what it did come to mean for the deeper and more religious spirits of China. With this book liberated thought, and, still more, religio-mystical speculation, come into their own. We shall later mention two or three of the best known of the early Taoists. But first we would point out a few of the weaknesses of this system.

Both Laotze and Confucius hold to the opinion that "the human heart is originally good". They seem to have no understanding of the terrible heritage of evil inclinations and heavy lading of ill which, from a purely psychological point of view, weigh down the individual and society; and which, in sheer logic, indicate a great fall in the morning of the human race. Therefore they credit man with powers and capacities which history does not find to be the common possession of the human race.

Nor is there any clear reference to a source of power from without. Consequently there were only a very few who, in some way incomprehensible to us, were gripped and empowered by God—like a Melchizedek and the Wise Men of the East in ancient times—and who were able to make full use of the teachings given (cf. Acts 10: 35; Jn. 11: 52).

For the vast majority of the Chinese, either the whole movement was vitiated by dragging it down into the grossest superstition and materialism, or they were satisfied with the knowledge of the ethical demands, and went on living their life in fear and powerlessness.

In Laotze's system the concept of God is rendered still more abstract, and still farther removed from reality, especially by the blending with *Tao*; though we must also grant that Laotze has penetrated more deeply into the divine mystery than any other Chinese of ancient times (cf. his allusions to the Trinity). This is shown in a special way in the emphasis laid upon *Wu-wei* (non-activity). This does not mean that nothing should be done. It signifies the exalted state, when action spontaneously is flowing out from a heart which has been tuned in to full harmony with *Tao* (the divine law of life).



It cannot be denied that Laotze's conception of laws and regulations might lead in practice to impossible conditions. In contrast to Confucius, who, as has been indicated, was pronouncedly a man of law, Laotze maintained that to make laws was a contradiction. Only as *Tao* permeated men could there be the right kind of life in all its relationships. But then no laws would be needed, for "everyone was a law unto himself" (conscience). To promote laws and decrees was therefore but to proclaim weakness. Logical as this seems, it is too far removed from the realities of life. The pedagogical side of the matter is not included (the element of training and discipline), and yet it is just this phase which plays so large a part in social life. *Worship and religious ceremonial also play a very unimportant rôle with Laotze.*

#### OTHER EARLY TAOISTS

Among the most famous of the disciples must be mentioned Lieh-tze and Chwang-tze.

The former of these is a somewhat legendary mystic, closely connected with the ancient schools of mystery. It is noticeable already at this time that the contrast between the two schools is being sharpened. For Lieh-tze presents the master's teachings in the boldest possible way. He even goes beyond him. He deduced consequences of Laotze's system which by their boldness simply appalled the sceptical Confucianists.

He dwells with special fondness upon the unreality of matter and the reality of the idea. From this come all the transitional forms and changes which characterize existence. "Why be anxious about life's dispensations? Is not death—which is merely a return, or a new transition—constantly with us? My body is not something of my own. I am but the possessor of it for the present, and shall give it back when I go to 'Mother Abyss'.—Let me accept the good which the gods bestow, and enjoy it today, and the morrow will take care of itself."—This is one of his most characteristic statements.

It is also told of him that he went to Yin Hsi, and inquired of him very particularly about the rules which Laotze was supposed to have given, for the attainment of divine rank and power even in this life. For a long time Yin Hsi would not answer this question, but later admitted that men could walk on air and go through fire. "But," he added, "this power comes only with possession of pure spirit, and cannot be artificially acquired." But Lieh-tze, in his speculations, does not keep to that rule. On the contrary, he speaks of mysterious magi who were able to put men in touch with "The Royal Mother of the

West" (*Hsi-wang-muh*), and thereby give them divine power. He also mentions a certain Lao-Ching-tze, who from Yin Hsi is supposed to have learned—nothing less than the art of creation!

Lieh-tze differed much from his master also at other points.

The other well-known philosopher of the school was Chwangtze, possibly a contemporary of Mencius.

He was a very able scholar, who in his speculations and presentation kept quite close to Laotze. This is probably the reason why he enjoys a certain recognition among Confucianists to the present time, and this in spite of the fact that he laid bare without mercy some of the weaknesses of Confucianism.

His most famous work is *Nan-hwa-ching*, in which in the most vivid way he portrays the deplorable results of going contrary to nature in politics, in social and religious affairs, and in all the other spheres of life. He may be called the Rousseau of the East, who has cast into the complicated life of China the kindling phrase: "Return to Nature!" Only so, thinks Chwangtze, will it be possible to attain the simplicity of body and soul which more than anything else favours the life of the spirit.

He also had much to say about the unreality of this life. In this connection it is told that he once had a dream. He seemed to have been changed into a butterfly, which flitted about, completely forgetful of ever having been a Chwangtze. But suddenly he awoke, and found that he was Chwangtze after all. Then came the thought: "When I seemed to be a butterfly, was *that* dream or reality; or am I now a butterfly dreaming that I am a Chwangtze?"

#### LATER TAOISM

Proceeding to picture the fate of Taoism in its main lines, as it developed in China, we may use the words of the Chinese literary critic, Chu Hsi: "The disciples of Laotze moved farther and farther away from the teachings of the master, in proportion to their separation from him in time." All metaphysical speculation receded into the background, and all sorts of superstition and wild fancies were cultivated.

We have not the materials to outline the various steps in this development. Not before we come to the time of Emperor Chin-She-huang do we get more light upon the movement. But what a different picture we get of Taoism then! This emperor, who brought contempt upon his name by causing the ancient writings and the Confucian literature to be burned, very soon showed a special interest in the Taoist writings. He speedily came under

the influence of the Taoist doctors, and it went so far that he outfitted at great cost an expedition to the fabled lands and islands of the Eastern Sea. There the water and the pill (*nien-tan*) of immortality, as well as the philosopher's stone were supposed to be found. For there dwelt the genii of the great spirits, under the protection of *Tung-wang-fu*, the personification of the Yang forces. He appointed Seu She, a professor of magic, leader of the expedition. This man claimed to have had a revelation, according to which the success of the expedition depended upon sending several thousand young men and women with it. And so it was arranged, but the result was naturally complete disillusionment. Another expedition was sent, with the same result.

It was also under Chin She-huang that the leading Taoist teachers began to call themselves Chin-jen—i.e., "True Men". These *Chin-jen* professed to be able to control the forces of nature. Water and fire could not harm them. By the use of their magical powers they could bring on storms, and stop them. They could see ahead into the future, etc. (cf. the expression for achieving immortality, *chen hsien*).

These "mighty" and "holy" men could naturally not die an ordinary death. Like Laotze, they were plucked away from the earth. This disappearance was most often accomplished by their friends, who took their bodies away after death had done its work.

It is also at this time that one first begins to hear about the legendary emperor Hwang-ti as the original great Taoist (*circa* 2697 B.C.). Laotze seemed too modern, and so they discovered this emperor character in the dawn light of China's history as a convenient starting point.

Under the Han dynasty Taoism made a strong advance. On the whole it was a time specially favourable for spiritual movements. The movement made great progress, particularly under Emperor Wu. Under the influence of Taoist teachers it became increasingly common for people to move out from inhabited regions to lonely places, where they gave themselves to all sorts of remarkable practices. In this way they were to be spiritualized and filled with *Tao*. (Hermit—*ien-sih*.) From a purely physiological point of view this could be accomplished by regular and continued breathing exercises. Such great breaths could be taken that "the air penetrated clear to the heels".

Asceticism—particularly fasting and meditation—was an excellent means. By means of a vegetarian diet, and as little of that as possible, one could gain the mastery over oneself and obtain immortality. The whole process is called *ni lei-t'an*: "to cultivate the inner embryo".

It was exceedingly praiseworthy to undertake long journeys and find those virgin regions of the earth which had not yet been trodden by the foot of man. In such places they were to live in colonies. In these colonies of spiritualized people life should be lived on the highest and most spiritual plane, on a co-operative basis.

In addition to the previously mentioned Eastern Paradise, where Tung-wang-fo ruled, there was also a Western Paradise, *Kwun-lun*, which was highly desired. This Western Paradise was regarded as subject to the "Royal Mother of the West", *Hsi-wang-muh* (Ying forces), who together with the highest spirits (genii) ruled all things in endless joy and happiness.

And then, on the way to these distant paradises there were islands which for the "spiritually minded" (*ieu tao-sin-ti*) provided resting places along the way.

What a mystical drawing power such hopes, dangled before them, exercised even upon the masses during the golden age of the Han dynasty, may be seen clearly enough from the many historical records of the time. In many places fields remained unploughed and unsown, and large enterprises were at a standstill, because people were on pilgrimage to distant regions, or were entirely taken up with their spiritual exercises.

It was China's "crusading" period, when people, from the throne to the lowest levels of the social order, were mightily caught up with vague, but none the less powerful religious emotions. There is therefore a peculiar glow about this period and this chapter of the history of Taoism.

But the reaction was all the stronger on this account, and the falling away to materialism all the more decisive, when it began to dawn upon people that all these proffered hopes were but a single empty *fata morgana*.

Consider the many scrolls in China whose subject matter is taken from these pilgrimages. Best known is that of "The Eight Holy Ones who Crossed the Sea" (*Pah shien tu hai*). The group consists of holy men and one holy woman, taken from various periods of ancient Chinese history. They found one another in a common longing, and "stole a march on heaven" as they in one united band started overseas for the Western Paradise. Their various instruments (the smith with the sledgehammer, the man with the crutch, etc.) aided them in the terrible struggle with the elements which the water dragon aroused. Their names were: Chang K'o Kuan, Tang Hsiang Tze, Tsao Kwo-Kiu, Ho Hsien-Ku, Lan Tsai-ho, Han Hsiang-tsi, Lü Tung-pin and Chung Li-ch'nan.



## TAOISM ORGANIZED INTO A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

Hitherto Taoism had been a movement. And since it was indigenous, and there was no rival beside it, the movement spread in various degrees among all classes.

But the rival came. It appeared in the form of a foreign, richly developed religious system, with a high level of culture and outward apparatus, as well as inner wealth of thought. This was Buddhism. And as it came just at a favourable time, when hearts were religiously moved, and also carried with it something of the fairyland glow of the western regions, it is not surprising that it gradually won a foothold among the Chinese people.

Little by little this became clear to the Taoist leaders. And when this discovery had been made we see Taoism being led along the same pathway.

The one who is given foremost credit for this enterprise is Chang Tao-ling, well known throughout China. He was born, according to tradition, in the year A.D. 34, probably in Tien-Mu-Shan, in the province of Chekiang, and was the descendant of a minister of state, Chang Liang. Legend has it that Laotze himself appeared to him in his home district of Kwei-Ki in the province of Kiangsi, and gave him command to organize the Taoist movement.

Chang Tao-ling, who was "a holy one" (or sage), skilled in producing elixirs of life, as well as in exorcism, etc., went confidently to work. With the help of his "pills of immortality" he regained his youth at the age of sixty. He was "taken to heaven" at the age of 123. The *literati* have been unmerciful in their judgment of Chang. They often call him merely "The Rice Thief". Emperor Chen Tsung conferred on him and his descendants the title "The True Prince".

He was successful, and "as a reward for his obedience Laotze decreed that the high priesthood should belong perpetually to his family". This is the objective right which the Chang clan claims to the present day, as the one who by lot is chosen from its midst continues to function as the Primate of the Taoist community.

Circa A.D. 160 Chang Tao-ling succeeded in organizing a semi-clerical state within China's borders. This happened in the huge province of Sze-chuen. His grandson, Chang Lau, also gained power over the province of Shen-si. Every member paid a fixed tribute, and the community blossomed as never before.

Even in regions not subject to this "Taoist church-state" the Highpriest Chang had his emissaries, who organized temple

worship and cloister life, diocesan divisions and tribute payments. These were sent out in the beginning from distant Sze-chuen, and later from the home district in Kiangsi.

In most matters one can discern the influence and pattern of Buddhism.

We shall later in a special division consider the Taoist pantheon. But it may be noted here that as Buddhism everywhere presents its Buddha in three persons (*Tathagata*, for the three periods, past, present and future, and for the existential forms: "The Basic, The Body of Heavenly Glory, and The Earthly Appearance"), so the Taoist Trinity was represented by three images as *San Tsing*, the "Three Pure Ones", often expressed as *Tai-tsing*, *San-tsing* and *Yü-tsing*.

In admonition to confession of sin, in the attempt to bring about prohibition of the slaughter of animals, as well as in the designation "The Religion for the Promotion of Peace in the Universe", there are gleams of the influence of Buddhism.

Part of the clerical Taoist state came to a tragic end. A backslider accused the leaders of revolt against the empire, and a bloody persecution broke out (A.D. 184). All civil authority passed over gradually to the Han dynasty, and the organization had to struggle under difficult conditions.

As the religious flame died down the differentiation from Confucianism became more clear. This was more especially the case after Taoism had taken into its pantheon a whole mass of gods. (See section "The Taoist Pantheon".)

With Buddhism, too, the Taoist religious community began to have skirmishes. These took the form at times of public disputations and trials of strength (working of miracles), in which both parties claimed the victory. The imperial house favoured first one and then the other of these religions. At times, influenced by strongly Confucianist ministers and counsellors, it brought an iron hand down upon both. There were often the most terrible persecutions.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF TAOISM

The relationship between the Taoist and Buddhist communities soon changed. From hostile rivalry they went over to a state of tolerance, and later there developed a condition of real friendliness. For it could not be concealed that Buddhism became increasingly the leading religion for the masses of China. The only salvation for the Taoist community was to lean upon the one that was stronger, and adopt as many Buddhist elements as possible.

Theoretically this could be defended. For, according to the developed thought of Taoism, all the divinities that appeared ought to find a place in its pantheon. It had long adopted this attitude toward Confucianism. All the gods of the state from the Confucian system had been given places of honour in its temples, and all the ancient classics were, of course, their common possession from the beginning.

The Taoist leaders brought forth a highly developed system of ethics in the course of time. Celibacy, of which there was an attempted beginning, soon went by the board, and marriage and family life became the established rule.

On the whole it became the distinguishing mark of the Taoists that they lived among the people. It is true that cloisters were to be found here and there. But these played an unimportant rôle; the majority of Taoists were never to be found there, but in the mass life of city and town. Some functioned in the local temples, some lived round about in private homes. They often combined into larger groups, or firms, which carried on the business of exorcism on a large scale.

Slowly but surely the whole Taoist system descended from its spiritual heights to the grossest traffic in demonology. And in the same degree it lost the respect of the people. When one now sees one of these Taoist priests (*Tao-si*), clad in his long blue robe, and with his hair done in a knot on top of his head, come dragging along with his varied paraphernalia of exorcism, it is not easy to look upon him as an authentic heir and representative of Laotze. But then it is not easy to maintain oneself alongside the dominant Buddhist community; stronger and ever stronger medicine is needed.

In one field, however, the Taoists have maintained their position of leadership. This is in the matter of time reckoning<sup>1</sup> and geomancy. Here there is complete co-operation with the fortune-telling groups. (See section, "Fortune Telling and its Relation to the Fate Categories", Chapter I). This is true to the extent that it is often difficult to distinguish between them.

Since they are supposed to have knowledge of the *Tao* of existence, they must naturally be experts in the matter of *feng-sui*, lucky and unlucky days, and the mysteries of the stars. Here the Taoists therefore have a wide field where they can continue to practise. Their leading experts have accordingly been regularly used in the annual preparation of the almanac. With their intimate knowledge of the endless number of gods, they have rendered good service both as astrologers and as genealogists.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, calculating auspicious days.

Under these varying conditions the highpriest of the community has his seat in the province of Kiangsi, in his castle on the heights near Kwei-Ki, "Dragon-tiger Mountain" (*Long-Hu-shan*). At intervals he sent out his trusted men to fire the enthusiasm of priests who had grown dull, to deliver in the districts round about proclamations and notices of decrees from the spirit world, and to gather contributions for great sacrificial feasts "for the common good".

In this way he has been able to keep himself in the public eye in China as the great master of demons. (The imperial house bestowed special privileges upon him, as have also the provincial governments, and extensive rice fields have up to the present been in the possession of the Chang clan.) In this way he has exercised a considerable influence, in spite of the fact that the political power that once was his has been broken.

But under the influence of the recent revolution, which has changed China in so many ways, much of his power and position has been lost, and it is only a matter of time before the last gleams of his glory will fade.

It is especially in northern and north-western China that Taoism still has some strength. The sacred mountain, Huashan, in Shensi, is even now occupied chiefly by Taoist priests, and they have some really impressive buildings there: five temples—one in the centre, and one for each of the four regions of heaven.<sup>1</sup> They differ from the Buddhists in calling their temples Kwan. There is a large temple in Peking, *Pai Yuen Kwan*, with which their not inconsiderable literary activity is connected. The Abbot is called *Taokwan*. Taoist temples may also be recognized by the conical roofs of the buildings that lie up along the slope of a hill. In the back court there is often a garden, with a series of small pavilions.

The pavilions are intended as "cells" for the monks, who, either alone or in groups, devote themselves to ascetic exercises and meditation.

There is often an almost oppressive stillness over the whole, a certain lifelessness.

In a few places there are cloisters of considerable size, as on the previously mentioned Huashan, or on Wu-tang-shan, in north-western Hupeh.

Also within Taoist circles there are those who specially emphasize meditation. These favour pilgrimages, often to distant places, during which meditation is carried on under the open sky. They may be seen with face lifted toward the sky,

<sup>1</sup> They are also influential on Taishan and Laoshan, in the province of Shantung.



and legs crossed, so the soles of the feet turn up. The inside of the hands is also turned up. (*Wu shin chiu tien*—i.e., "The five surfaces expectantly turned toward heaven".)

### TAOIST LITERATURE

Within the Taoist community there were also those who wished to present the leading ideas of Taoism in a somewhat popular form. Particularly about the sixteenth century we find a considerable number of Taoist literary productions. These had a common title, *Tao Chang* ("Statements About Tao").

In these *Tao Chang* much of Laotze's philosophy of life is to be found. But later influences are also very noticeable. One can see particularly how Confucian thought colours it throughout. On the other hand, Buddhism and the rising tide of animism, together with all kinds of magic and exorcism, exercised a large influence upon the entire literature.

But in spite of all its uncertainty and weakness, it is nevertheless a well-meant attempt to bring to the great masses an understanding of the law of life (*Tao*), in order that peace and happiness may be attained, here and hereafter. Therefore it became a meritorious act to distribute *Tao Chang*, and to spread the writings in the greatest possible number. And it is almost incredible what a quantity of that kind of literature has been printed and distributed in China.

The most extensive collection of Taoist literature is the *Tao Tsang Chuen Shu*, in no less than eighty quarto volumes. One who wants to know the magical side of Taoism should read *Tao Shu Chuen Chi*. Besides these there are innumerable Taoist-coloured writings. Chinese dramatic literature is also influenced in high degree by Taoist ideas and legends.

Within *Tao Chang* there are especially two books that have played a leading rôle, and which therefore require more detailed consideration.

The first and more important of these is *Kan Ying Pien*, or "The Book of Reward and Punishments." The author is unknown. (The claim that it comes from Laotze's hand is impossible.) In 1212 brief sections it gives a picture of persons and conditions down through the course of time to the beginning of the Ming period. Short, compressed ethical rules are added to each section. Many of the thoughts are beautiful and striking. Following are some of the most characteristic of them:

Laotze said: Men's evil or good fate does not depend on the future; one carries his own fate with him in the process of living. The recompense of good or evil follows one, as the shadow follows the object.

For this reason there are spirits in heaven and on earth whose function it is to take account of men's faults, and, according to the degree of their wrongdoing, to reduce the length of their life by hundred-day periods. . . .

There are also three advisory spirits, and a "Prince of Spirits", who are set over mankind. These report the crimes and faults of men, and effectuate the shortening of their lifetime by periods of from one hundred days to twelve years.

The three spirits (*San-chi*) that dwell in the human body itself, present in the palace of heaven every fifty-third day (*Kang shin*) an account of men's crimes and sins.

On the last day of the month the "Heart Spirit" does the same. If one is guilty of a great sin, his lifetime is reduced by twelve years; if he transgresses in a minor way, a hundred days are deducted.

Walk not in crooked paths.

Practise righteousness and filial piety. Be loving toward your younger brothers, and respectful toward your elder brothers.

Purify yourself, and convert men.

Be merciful toward the orphan, and compassionate toward the widow.

Do harm to no one, nor to insects, plants or trees.

Give with joy, etc.

A person who observes these things is called virtuous. He is respected by all. Providence preserves him. Good fortune and official appointment await him. In whatever he begins, he succeeds, and to him belongs the hope of immortality.

He who desires to become an immortal in heaven must do 1,300 good deeds. He who would be an immortal on earth must do 300 good deeds.

It is very significant that such expressions are used as *chi shen*—good, fortune-bringing gods, and *oh shen*—evil, misfortune-bringing gods.

The following statement is attributed to Chwangtze: He who commits a crime by daylight will be punished by men; he who does evil in secret will be punished by demons.

Do not spit toward falling stars, for falling stars are ordained by the "Supreme Lord" as a warning to sinners.

Do not prepare your food with filthy wood (as fuel).

Do not weep or spit toward the north.

The other well-known book in the *Tao Chang* collection is *Yin-chih-wen*, or "The Book of Secret Blessing." It contains a whole series of ethical statements. It makes no pretence of lofty

philosophy, but presents the rules of life in Confucianist thought and tone. It carries the atmosphere of broad tolerance. The "Three Religions" are set side by side; even the Buddha is mentioned as one to be worshipped. Vegetarianism is praised. Accordingly the book is well received in all the religious circles in China, and therefore it has so wide a circulation.

The book itself claims that its origin is connected with a god called *Wen-chang*. Its real origin is unknown. Sincerity is given the foremost place. It is the root of all good instincts. "Clothe the naked; bury the dead; feed the hungry." "Use honest weights and measures." "Save the life of animals, and keep from shedding blood." "Keep a lighted candle in the window, that the wayfarer may find his way." "Keep a boat in readiness, that the traveller may cross the river," etc. This is the line of thought that continues throughout the 540 characters that make up the book.

In still later Taoist literature it is clear that Buddhism has had a strong influence. An example of this is the appearance of conceptions about hell, something which was entirely foreign to earlier Taoism.

We would finally make mention of the little writing which is in some respects the most profound of them all. Its title is, *Chioh-si-ching, The Right Understanding of Life, or The Right Worldview*. It speaks first about the importance of fulfilling the great duties in life: reverence for superiors, obedience to parents, and loyalty to one's principles. He who directs his life according to the demands of life's law will stand both here and hereafter. Transgression of this law is to be regarded as stealing, for one wastes time which is precious, and that is stealing.

In this connection comes the remarkable statement: "Every human heart is God, and God is the heart." And again: "He who deceives his own heart deceives God."

There are three things that should be feared, and four things that ought to be known: One should fear oneself, the cloak of darkness, and secret deception. For the Most High (God) searches all things: "Ten eyes behold you; four hands point at you; not even a falling hair escapes his notice."

Or take a word like this: "Lay up for yourselves treasures that continue in the region of death" (*Kwang tsi ying-Kung*). Cf. Christ's word about making friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive you in the everlasting mansions. The well-known saying: "Conceal the evil and mention the good" (*yin oh, jang shan*) in speaking of neighbours also appears among these rules of living.

## THE TAOIST PANTHEON

There is hardly any point at which Taoism has more definitely departed from its original type than in the matter of images and image worship. Laotze does not even mention the worship of gods, much less the worship of images.

We have seen the course of development: the keynote of deep spirituality in original Taoism soon disappeared, and in its place appeared the fantastic dream stuff about the wonder lands of East and West. When these dream bubbles burst the community descended to the gloomy levels of magic and animism which have from ancient times characterized Chinese thought life. Now all this was made an organic part of Taoism. State and local gods, guild and nature deities—all were given their place. Not only so, but as the door had been opened to the principle of polytheism, new gods were steadily added. This development proceeded so far that every object and every relationship had its idea personified in some deity. And so the sad and, in a way, the unthinkable thing happened, that the one religion in China which was most clear and spiritual at its source came in the course of time to be loaded down with the baggage of magic and polytheism more than any other. The moral regulations and all the contemplations of the *Tao* which proceeded side by side with spirit worship could not save the Taoist community from degeneration. When, therefore, Buddhism had outfitted itself with images, Taoism immediately followed.

As already mentioned, the important thing was to immortalize Laotze, as Buddhism had immortalized its Buddha. This was accomplished by putting up an image for each of the "Three Pure Ones" (*San tsing*), answering to the three great *Tathagata*, representing the three periods and three forms of existence, for the one great Buddha.

It was found somewhat less logical, however, to go to Laotze with prayers and offerings, in order to get help in the trials of everyday life. For he was the spirit-filled one, continually sunk in contemplation, who could not be burdened with everyday affairs. Another great god must take his place for this purpose. This came to be the one so highly honoured in Taoism, *Yü-huang Shang-ti*—"The Precious Emperor God", or "The Jade Emperor", or "The Pearly Emperor".

The origin of this god is far from clear. The name might indicate that we have here a faint reflection of the great god *Shang-ti*, who was worshipped in the earliest times among the Chinese, and to whom the best of the emperors and philosophers



have paid homage down through the ages. This is also no doubt the case. He is the popular god of the people, a reflection of *Shang-ti*, the Heavenly Lord of the rulers and upper classes. He, Yü-huang, occupies a leading position. His special function is sometimes limited to meting out rewards and punishments. This is done through the various *shen* (gods), and through the hades arrangement.

The Buddhists claim that Yü-huang is "stolen" from them, since he is really their *Yü Ti* (*Ti-shih*, the Chinese name of *Indra*). Under the name *Yü Ti* he sometimes appears as "The Supreme God" at the great mountains.

The Emperor Chen Tsung (998 A.D.) seems to have cast the robe of *Shang-ti* upon him for political reasons. From that time on he became very popular. Yü-huang *Shang-ti's* representative for all time is the high priest Chang.<sup>1</sup>

Other heaven and earth gods soon came up beside him. According to the Taoists, the earth is composed of five elements: metal, wood, water, fire and earth. Corresponding to these there are five planets shining in the sky: Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars and Saturn. Of course there are huge images in the Taoist temples to indicate their dignity.

In connection with the highest and most revered group of gods in Taoism, "The Three Pure Ones" (*San Tsing*), the following view has gradually become dominant among Taoists: That which has no beginning, which is behind all existence, is summed up in *Tao*. Another expression for this basic concept, as we have previously seen, was introduced into Chinese metaphysics in the eleventh century A.D. by the philosopher Chow Tun-i, through his famous work, *Tai-chi Tu Shoh*. This is the concept *Wu-chi* ("Without Summit"). From his time the complete evolutionary formula of Taoism was established. But there are also other lines that cut into the essentially religious mystery. Even the basic concept can be conceived as comprehending three different phases: the Basic Body (spiritual, not material), the Manifestation, and the Activity.

The Buddhist influence is very evident here. The Basic Body, the first of the "Three Pure Ones" (*Yü Tsin*), was gradually personified, and as such received the descriptive name *Yuen-shi Tien-Tseng* ("The Revered Heaven Lord of Origins"). The Forms of Manifestation were personified in *Tao-teh Tien-tseng* ("The Revered Heaven Lord of the Way and Virtue). The earthly incarnation was naturally thought of as Laotze, and after him all the prophet personages who in life and teaching have given expression to the great *Tao*. The Activity, Energy,

<sup>1</sup> See section "Taoism Organized into a Religious Society."

is given the eloquent name *Ling-pao Tien-teseng* ("The Revered Heaven Lord of the Precious Spirit").

This really lofty Taoist doctrine of the trinity, however, has played no important rôle in their practical religious life. It is mostly a matter of abstractions which the more thoughtful leaders within the movement use in order to gain clearness and unity under the continuing development of their religious system.—During the later centuries they have often tried to combine Yü-huang with *Yuen-shi Tien-tseng*.

Other heavenly bodies, such as the Great Bear, are also worshipped (*Towmoo* and *Kweising*). And of course the Thunder-god *Lei-kong*. He is often represented as standing on nine birds, surrounded by the images of as many as thirty-six generals. These are his obedient servants who go out at his command to punish the children of men. For *Lei-kong* is very stern. He is particularly merciless toward those who kidnap children, and who oppress widows and orphans.

*Wen-shen*, the god of epidemics, and *Ho-shen*, the god of conflagrations, are much feared.

The Dragon King (*Lung-wang*) is a very mysterious figure in the procession of gods. He is portrayed as a huge, repulsive amphibian, and is much revered and worshipped. Since his special function is connected with floods, millions of Chinese feel that their fate is in his hands.

The god of literature is Wen Chang Ti-Chün, the divine spirit of Chang-chung, who was a learned mandarin of the Chou dynasty. His name has been celebrated most energetically by the student youth of China through the centuries, for their whole literary career lay in his keeping. There was therefore a little temple in his honour erected near every examination hall and larger school. This temple was often built in the form of a tower, in whose upper story His Highness dwelt. It was surrounded by beautiful gardens with ingenious vestibules. In other places he was enthroned in great temple halls.

In speaking of the God of Literature we have used the past tense, not because his temple halls are entirely gone, but the better to bring out the fact that his influence has been radically declining. None of the other gods have in the same degree felt the pressure of modern times. It began in 1907, when the old examination system was abrogated by imperial edict, and the order given for a school system built according to Western pattern. The old examination halls were immediately changed into schools. Gardens and buildings which had previously been dedicated to Wen Chang were used as gymnasiums and classrooms, and groups of young students, gripped by new ideas,

passed contemptuously by the frowning old image of Wen Chang. And now after the revolution it looks as if this god, as well as many others, will at no distant day be moved into the museum as a curiosity from the old days.

Down through the centuries the Emperor used also to bring his offerings twice a year to the God of Literature.

Next in order of importance among the Taoist gods comes the "God of War", *Kwang-ti*. During his earthly life (*circa* A.D. 160) Kwang-yü, as he was then known, was a poor young man from Shansi, who made his living by selling little articles. But he had a strong inclination toward military service, and so he enlisted as a soldier of the Han dynasty. It was in the period of the "Three Kings".

Together with the generals of later fame, *Liu Pei* and *Chang Fei*, he made a sworn pact in a peach orchard (*Tao yuen tse-i*).<sup>1</sup> They helped one another forward, and Kwang-yü especially distinguished himself by his courage and faithfulness. He soon became well known, rose in rank, and finally became a very able and celebrated military leader, who performed great deeds for his country. After he had been made a baron, envy and hostility began to grow up about him, and the result was that he was caught in the plot of his enemies, and was beheaded by Hsun Ch'uan in 220.

During the following centuries he was known to history as the great hero, but without any public homage being paid him. But a change came in 1828. At that time Emperor Tao-kwang was fighting the Mohammedan clans that were in revolt. In the decisive battle the enemy forces were frightened by strange phenomena in the air, and fled. Upon investigation the conclusion was reached that Kwang-yü had been there with his mighty spirit army. By imperial decree Kwang-yü was now declared to be the God of War,<sup>2</sup> and in an incredibly short time temples in his honour arose everywhere throughout the empire.

When the imperial forces had won the victory over the Taiping forces in 1855, Kwang-ti was raised to the same rank as Confucius, and since that time he has been one of the most celebrated gods in China. And curiously enough, not only among soldiers and military officers. The common man throughout the villages looks with much favour on Kwang-lao-je, as

<sup>1</sup> "To make a sworn pact in a peach orchard." This has become the conventional expression for the fraternal covenant which has become so common in China, and which is formed by a group of like-minded persons, who seek in that way to gain some advantage or to advance themselves in the community.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly the God of Loyalty.

he is popularly known. One often finds a little image of the stern, bewhiskered god set up in the *Sheng-kang* (Sacred Cabinet) of the home, by the side of the ancestral tablets. His temple is sometimes called *Wu shen miao* (Temple of the Military Spirit).

Another celebrated god is often given a similar place in the Chinese home. This is *Tsai-shen*, the God of Wealth. As may well be supposed, he is exceedingly popular. Huge temples are built in his honour, and people of all classes flock to his altars to sacrifice and worship. The crowds of worshippers are specially large on his birthday and at New Years. The three subordinated Star Gods function in connection with the God of Wealth. They administer wealth, high rank, and other earthly blessings.

Then there are the "Three Heavenly Stewards." The first of these, *Tsze-wei*, distributes good fortune; the second, *Tsing-Ling*, forgives sins on earth; and the third, *Yang-kow*, saves from disaster at sea.

We have previously mentioned the "Three Counsellors" (*San tai*), who keep watch over people's conduct, and give reports thereof in heaven, upon which *San-chi* makes record of everything in his books.

Besides these there is an innumerable host of minor gods and goddesses for every relationship of life, and for every object.

Last in the series of deities we would mention the special guardian spirits of everyday life. First and foremost comes the "Kitchen God", or *Sī-ming-shen*, who has his little altar near the cooking place. He is much feared, for, according to popular belief, he makes a report to Heaven at the end of each month on the conduct of each individual. The amusing custom of smearing the face of the Kitchen God with something sweet, in order to "bribe" him, is well known among the people.

The Gate and Door Gods (*Men-shen*) are easy to recognize, and they are naturally frightening to behold.

Those deities which are most essentially local gods, and gods of the soil (*Tu-ti*), have also been taken into the Taoist pantheon. Each of these gods of the soil is thought to rule over a small part of the earth's surface. From ancient times, therefore, China has been divided into a great many small parcels, each with its little open altar (*Tu-ti-miao*). Here incense is burned and offerings are brought, generally every day. The farmer is specially careful about his worship of the god of the soil. Above the altar may be seen the whole familiar family: *Tu-ti Kung* in the middle, and beside him wife and children, sometimes also servants and guards. It is quite significant that



the birthplace of an individual is given as the province of such and such a god of the soil, where he first saw the light of day.

The Taoist community has also, in the location of its sanctuaries, shown its preference for high peaks and mountainous regions. It has therefore naturally made a place in its worship for China's five sacred mountains. But since the influence of Buddhism is considerably greater in some of these places, we will postpone the discussion of these matters to the next chapter.

In later Taoism the element of terror plays a prominent rôle. It is supposed that the evil spirits can be put to flight by cunning, by surprise, and, most of all, by fright. This is continually evident in the acts of exorcism. When the act has reached its climax there are piercing shrieks, and a crash of sounds, of mingled human voices, ram's horn, and shrill instruments. It all ends suddenly, as the Taoist priest with full force strikes the table with his wooden club. The demons are now expelled, and as a guarantee the priest gives the fortunate dwellers in the house a long strip of paper which is covered with beautiful expressions about the Tao (!), and sealed with his own seal. Many families in China have such Taoist masses in their homes (*Hua fo*) twice a year, even if no misfortune has touched them; it is the best way to prevent misfortunes!

The cultured class is contemptuous of this traffic and the traffickers. They often deride all this sort of thing—until sickness, misfortune, or death is at hand: then they also send for the "tricksters"!

Among present-day Taoist priests and other personnel at the local temples one often finds veritable "worship firms", which carry on a regular business of masses for the dead, and exorcism in the way described above.

Let us finally see how these people set up their gallery of gods, most often in the form of large paper scrolls on the walls. The gods are combined in four main groups (*Kai*), often with a lot of Buddhist creatures added.

The first group is called *Tien-Kai* (Heaven group). Here we see *Fong-pek* and *Y-si*, *Lei-kung* and *Tien-mu* (God of Thunder and his wife), *P'an-kuan* and *Yü-nuang*. The Guardian Generals (life-guard) often appear standing around the Heaven Group. These are: *Wang-Yuen-tsai*, *Ma-Yuen-tsai*, *Yin-Yuen-tsai* and *Chu-Yuen-tsai*.

The second group is called *Ti-kai* (Earth Group). Here we meet *Tung-yoh-ta-ti*, *Tu-ti-Fung-tou-ta-ti*, *Ti-kuan-ta-ti*, *Giao-siou-pan-kuan*, *Niu-wang* (Ox King), and *Ma-wang* (Horse King).

The third group is named *Yang-kai* (Sunlight Group). It is

composed of *Cheng-Wu-sou-sih*, *Cheng-huang* (City God), *Wen-Chang* (God of Literature), *Nan-yoh*, *sen-ti*, a new *Tu-ti* (God of the Soil), and *Miao-wang*.

Finally there is the *Sui-kai* (Water Group). Here we have *Shü-chen-chun*, *Tung-ting-kung-chü* (Lord of Tungting Lake), *Yang-si-tsiang-chuen*, *Tung-hai-lung-wang* (Dragon of the Eastern Sea), *Tien-meng-tu-ti*, *Hung-pi-pan-kuan*, and *Sui-fo-ta-ti*.

Add to all of this three huge scrolls of *Sau-tsing* (Three Pure Ones), mentioned above, and it can be readily understood that there is a very respectable collection of pictures which is spread over or hung in the court, or in the guest hall, where the worship takes place.

In order to guard a home, a building, or a court still more securely against the influence of evil spirits, a Taoist priest may often be seen to set up, with elaborate gestures and ceremonies, a cut stone at the corner of the house, or in front of the building. Upon the stone are inscribed these words: *Tai shan si k'an-tang*, meaning: "The stone brought from the famous sacred mountain, Tai shan (Shantung), declares itself worthy to receive you, have no fear!" In other words "Away with you, evil spirit!" It is to be remembered that on Tai shan the Taoists have one of their strongholds.



## CHAPTER V

### CHINESE BUDDHISM

THE title "Chinese Buddhism" itself indicates the limitations of our subject. Our task will be to give a presentation of the history and character of Buddhism as developed on Chinese soil. We therefore leave untouched the origin of Buddhism in India, and everything connected therewith.

In a handbook like this it will naturally be impossible to include all of the immense body of material which presents itself. We shall have to confine ourselves to the main lines. For those who wish a more detailed account we refer to our book, *Truth and Traditions in Chinese Buddhism*, where the various questions connected with Chinese Mahayana Buddhism are more fully discussed.

It was the enlarged and greatly reformed kind of Buddhism, known by the name *Mahayana* ("The Greater Vehicle"), which was brought into China. The great slogan of this movement was expressed in a phrase: *Po chi chung seng*—"The salvation of every living thing", and this kindling watchword has had an immeasurable influence in China.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM INTO CHINA

It is by no means a complete explanation of the introduction of Buddhism into China to point to the famous dream which Emperor Ming, of the Han dynasty (A.D. 58-76), is said to have had in A.D. 61.

There were many circumstances which met, and opened the way for, the new religion. The first of these was the religious background. Confucius had never been able to satisfy the religious needs of the Chinese with his logical system of ethics. And in proportion as this became the official religion it was increasingly felt as a yoke. No answer was given to the deepest problems of existence—there was little comfort to be found, and no strength offered, for the turmoil of life, and against the horror of death.

On the other hand, Taoism had in a high degree brought to life the desire for religious speculation. Hearts were moved with a longing for something undefined, something which could fill life and eternity with light and happiness. And Taoism itself

had frequently intimated that this "something" must come from the mysterious lands of the west. A few were also acquainted with India as a hazy, mythical sort of concept, *Tien Chiu*.

But it was really travel and trade that drew aside the veil, so China got a glimpse of the power and peculiar character of India's religious life. Under Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (140-86 B.C.) the famous Chinese traveller Chang-chien was sent to the regions bordering China on the west and south, to confer with the tribes there. One of these journeys took him as far as Parthia, whose ruler was then Mithridates II. From this journey Chang-chien brought back to the Chinese royal palace an account of the golden image of Buddha.

This remarkable Chinese traveller, who during his perilous journeys had spent ten years as prisoner among the Turks of eastern Asia, seems to have been the first to know the name of Buddha. But many of those who had been connected with trade caravans had heard tales of mysterious temples from the borders of Burma and Bengal.

Buddhist literature began later, in an almost unnoticeable manner, to drift in over the border, and by the year A.D. 60 there was already some knowledge of Buddhism in considerable circles in China. When, therefore, Emperor Ming in the year 61 had his dream or vision, one of his ministers, Fu-yih, was able at once to call the attention of the Emperor to the western god Buddha.

Following is the account of the dream: A massive golden figure came flying down from heaven. It paused in its flight just above the royal palace, where it swayed back and forth. The head was surrounded by an aura of light, and the glory of the sun and moon lay over its body.

The Emperor was greatly frightened, but was quieted by Fu-yih's assurance that it was all but a reflection of the shining god, Buddha, of India. Under the influence of this explanation Emperor Ming sent a deputation off to secure more definite information about this divinity. The deputation was made up of eighteen men.

After long journeys and much hardship they reached the region in north-western India that had lately been conquered by the "White Huns", the *Vajjis* (Chinese *Yüeh chi*). Kanishka, the powerful king of the Huns, held sway at that time. Under still greater difficulties they proceeded, and after a short time we find them in distant Magadha, south of the Ganges. This was a centre of Buddhist relics and Buddhist literature. The deputation secured a number of these precious



objects. In addition they got two learned Buddhists (priests) to accompany them, and thus armed they started homeward. In the year 67 they successfully reached China's capital, Loyang (the present Honanfu, in the province of Honan). Loyang, which was the first seat of Buddhism in China, continued to be its heart and centre. Here the first temple was built, by imperial command. It was called "The Temple of the White Horse" (*Peh-ma-tien*)<sup>1</sup>

#### THE FIRST PERIOD OF BUDDHISM IN CHINA

The two priests who were brought from India seem to have entered upon their mission with zeal and enthusiasm. We know their names: Gobharana and Matanga. The former received the Chinese name Chu Fa-lan, the latter She Mo-teng. Among the books they brought from India was a *Life of Buddha*.

This book consists of five chapters. The narrative agrees on the whole with the information which we have about the Buddha from India. Still, some additions and some embellishment may be noticed in the translation which these two priests made of the life of Sakyamuni.

It should be stated that Buddha always appears in China under the clan name Sakyamuni<sup>2</sup>—Shī-gia-mu-ni in Chinese—not under the clan title of respect, "Gautama", nor his personal name "Siddhartha". The term "Buddha" (Fo in Chinese) is often applied in China to the whole group of "The Enlightened Ones", or to one or other of the Buddhist gods that later appeared. Therefore, in order to be sure that it is the historical Buddha who is being spoken of, one must say Shī-gia-mu-ni.

It is thought that this book on the life of Buddha is a free adaptation in abbreviated form of Asvaghosha's famous poem on this theme (*Budda Charita Kavya*).

In the following period a great deal of Buddhist literature was imported from India. This came mainly with the steady influx of Indian Buddhist priests. Such immigration continued at intervals for about 700 years. But Chinese also undertook pilgrimages toward the West, to see the holy land which had fostered the great "Enlightened One". Among the more famous pilgrims may be mentioned Fa-hsien (399), Song-Ryn (518), Hsuen-Chwang (629-45), and I-Tsing (671-95).

<sup>1</sup> The legendary statement is, that the first books and relics were brought to China upon a white horse. "The White Horse" later became an object of worship.

<sup>2</sup> From the family name Sakya. Sakyamuni: The Holy One of Sakya.

This intercourse helped greatly to prevent heresy and the corruption of the original scriptures. This is the reason why Chinese Buddhism, in spite of all nationalistic modification, has in the main kept so close to Indian Buddhism, at least theoretically.

It was mostly discourses on redemption, the world course (*Dharma*), and absorption into the great stillness (*Nirvana*), which were translated and copied (*Sutras*). A whole staff of learned monks were busy with this work around in the cloisters.

Soon a new literature appeared, that of commentaries. These came in immense quantities. Altogether there has been copied and printed so much in the course of centuries that it would be difficult to house it all under one roof. Scientific research work has been done on only a fraction of it. A catalogue from the year 518 contains 2,213 titles of Buddhist writings. Unfortunately much of this oldest literature has been lost through the severe persecutions that broke upon the Buddhist community. We have accordingly only 276 books left from this first period.

In the year 972 China received the entire *Tripitaka* (*Saṃt-sang*)—that is, the chief collection of the sacred scriptures of Buddhism. As in the case of the Indian norm, it is divided into three parts: (1) *Lü*—Law Scriptures, (2) *Ching*—The Scriptures, and (3) *Lun*—Essays. To these must be added as peculiar to China, (4) Mixed Writings (*Tsa*). A great many writings dropped out in the course of time, and later ones were added. The whole number has now been consolidated into 1662 writings. It may be said that the Chinese *Tripitaka* is more than 700 times the size of our Bible. The most dissimilar, and in part contradictory writings are combined, corresponding to the many various ways of salvation included in Mahayana's extensive system (*fa-men*).

The first three hundred years after Buddhism's introduction into China are characterized by quiet, and a deep religious seeking. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the new religion went forward with smooth and unbroken progress along the whole line, favoured as it was with imperial protection, with the soil well prepared by Taoism, and itself equipped with all the brilliant apparatus of worship which only India's glowing religiosity could bring into being.

In the year 335 permission was granted for Chinese to take the monastic vow, and many availed themselves of the opportunity. It was not long till monks and nuns swarmed everywhere, and in similar measure the number of temples and cloisters grew. In the capital city, Loyang, forty-two cloisters,

with temple halls and pagodas, were built. Under the Han dynasty there were even some of the emperors and imperial princes who gave themselves up to Buddhist studies.

But persecutions and trials were also to come in full measure. As early as the later years of the Han dynasty there were signs of disfavour. The tides of misfortune which began to roll in over the country were connected with the new religion.

It became still worse under the Tang dynasty (620-904). Under the first emperor of this dynasty, Kaou-tsu, one of the ministers, Fu-yi, made the following accusation against the Buddhist organization: "The Buddhist monks and nuns with their celibacy are a drain upon the strength of society; they are unproductive individuals who decrease the national wealth." This Confucian charge found a hearing with the emperor, and strict regulations were drafted to decrease the number of those entering the cloisters. It is said that 12,000 monks were forced back into civilian life.

Later there was a brief period of progress under Ta-tsung and Shien-tsung. It was during the reign of these emperors that a bone of Buddha was purchased in India, and with immense pomp and ceremony brought into the capital.

The most terrible persecution of all broke out in 845. By an edict of the emperor Wu-tsong, 4,600 cloisters were razed to the ground, 40,000 smaller meeting places destroyed, and 260,000 monks and nuns forced back into ordinary life. These figures give some indication of the enormous extent of monastic life at that time. Statistics from the time of Kublai Khan indicate that there were 213,148 Buddhist temples in China at that period.<sup>1</sup>

All these persecutions originated with the most zealous supporters of Confucianism, the *literati*. These always regarded themselves as the very marrow of society, and they would with unswerving loyalty guard the "Five Great Relationships" from destruction. And it was from the ranks of the *literati* that the ministers and officials were recruited. There was therefore abundant opportunity for them to make their influence felt, and to bring pressure to bear on the imperial house.

With its celibate system, and its tendency toward world flight, Buddhism was bound to offer a special challenge to the Confucianist school. It did not even help that Buddhism gave Confucius a place of honour in its pantheon, and otherwise sought in many ways to accommodate itself to the requirements

<sup>1</sup>Concerning the last violent persecution under the Tai-pings (1852-1864), by action of the "Peace King" Hung Siu-tsuen consult ordinary historical works.

of the official religion. The cleft was too deep. Buddhism drew people away from home. Confucianism pointed the individual to his place in the home, there to practise filial piety, and fulfil the obligations of life.

In times of severe persecution blood often flowed in streams. But even when all was outwardly quiet, there was a continuous undermining process carried on by the Confucianists. In speech and writing, and with satire and derision they went forth to campaign against the "foreign" religion.

That Buddhism none the less has been able to maintain itself, yea more, has proved able to forge ahead to become the leading religion in China, indicates something of the strength of the longings and the fears which this religion has set in motion among the people of China. What fears do we mean, and what are these longings? To these questions we will seek to give answer in the following sections.

#### BUDDHISM'S GOAL

"As the sea everywhere has the same taste, that of salt, so my teaching has only one great objective, release" (or redemption). These are the Buddha's words, when he undertook to state the purpose of his message. This flavour Buddhism has also preserved on Chinese soil. In unending repetition and with endless variation the message of release permeates the whole cultus and the profound teaching (*Dharma*). And the secret of redemption is this: to submit oneself wholly to the laws of the order of the universe.

The laws of the "world order", or *Dharma*, were naturally identified with *Tao*. *Dharma* first of all gives enlightenment about *Karma*—i.e., the great circle (or wheel) of cause and effect, which conditions life in its ongoing. But it gives more. Through *Dharma* are revealed the great laws of life, which lead one out of the recurrences (birth and death) and into the great stillness—the eternal rest—the eternal life (*Nirvana*). The tremendous concept, *Nirvana*, is brought into the Chinese, not by translation, but by transliteration. It becomes *Nie-pan*. As a foreign, and rather mysterious term, it has not played as much of a rôle in China as in India. But there soon came another expression, which should, according to its deepest meaning, correspond to *Nirvana*: *Hsi-fang-chi-loh-si-kai*—"The Western Paradise". For the Chinese, with their more practical inclination, this was an exceedingly attractive concept.

The following will suggest, in a more detailed way, the thought of *Karma*: All desire which is satisfied brings with it new hunger, just as surely as birth is followed by death. Death



is anticipated with sorrow—*i.e.*, with desire for continued life. This desire results in a new birth, but not to the same existence as before. *Karma* has control of an endless variety of existence forms: beasts, birds, fish, serpents, plants, demon forms in a temporary hell, etc. The soul at death goes into one of these forms of existence, depending upon whether it has during life given itself over, in pursuit of desire, to satisfactions (sins) which are contrary to *Dharma* (the law of life).

But if the soul has practised self-denial, and lived its life according to *Dharma*, so it has attained "coolness of spirit", then it comes even in this life to the status of *Arhat* (*lohan*), and it is possible even to attain the status of *Bodhisattva* (Buddha-candidate). The necessity of rebirth is then overcome, and entrance to Nirvana assured: one is then a Buddha.

What the Chinese had only faintly sensed now dawned upon them as a great reality: on the one hand the transmigration of the soul, with the terrors of hell, and on the other the possibility of release.

These are, then, the fundamental ideas, in which both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism agree.

*Karma*, or the "Chain of Causation", the "Wheel of Life" (*Lung-hui*), has six great divisions, or "ways" (*Leu tao lung-hui*):

(1) The uppermost division is made up of gods, and is called heaven (*tien*). Specifically there are thirty-three heavens, where the various gods and lords of the spirits dwell. Even the buddhas may sojourn there periodically, though they have according to their status gained release from the "wheel", and have entered the great illumination and peace. They are really higher than the gods. They have been united with the "absolute" (*cheng Fo*). Heaven is the dwelling-place of the good men, but perfection is reached only through release from the wheel: through becoming a buddha.

The next two divisions are also accounted good (relatively speaking).

(2) This is the human division, where men live in all their manifold variety, according to the way in which virtue or fault in a former existence has determined their fate.

(3) The demon division (*Asuras*), where the creatures are half good and half bad, the women beautiful and the men ugly. The ruler is engaged in continuous warfare, both with the heaven god *Ti-shih* (*Indra*), and with the real devil spirits. All is characterized by duality.

(4) But worse, far worse is the fate of those who have sunk to the level of the next three divisions, called the "Three Evil

Ways'' (*San-oh-tao*). Here we find the Buddhist Hades, the hells of the region of the dead and of purgatory (*Ti-rao*), where the punishments are carried out through the almost endless periods of time (*kalpas*; Chinese, *chie*).

There are the eighteen great hells, ranging from the glowing hot to the icy cold; then the 500 smaller ones, and lastly the 1,000 little hells. Eight of the eighteen hells are specially notorious. These are the ones ruled by the famous eight chief tormentors or "Kings". They are often called *Wu-gien ti-rao*—i.e., the hells where everything is without limit. At the head of these eight hells with their tormentors are two overlords, in whose features are evident the most remorseless retribution and severity. The one is *Tung-yoh*, or *Tai-shan* (by ordinary people thought to be connected with the famous mountain in Shantung of the same name). The name of the other is *Yenloh*. *Yenloh* is the *Yama* of Hinduism, and a reminder of this incorruptible judge of Hades can make the most hardened Asiatic grow pale. In popular thought and speech these two overlords are often classified with the eight chief tormentors. It is said that the ten kings in Hades mete out the punishments through their many subordinates. Among these the real devil spirits often take the rôle of tormentors.

The whole matter of surveillance and punishment has gradually been developed, so that it has come to be understood that also on earth there are appointed higher and lower spirit rulers and officials who keep careful account of men's good and evil deeds. These report to Heaven, as well as to the officialdom of Hades, and all is written down, so that punishment or reward follows in due time. If there is any rock-fast truth for a Chinese it is this: "The good receives the reward of goodness; evil is given evil's reward. And if the recompense is delayed, it is because the time has not yet come."

This department is therefore, in accordance with the whole judicial system of the East, conceived as follows: The whole surface of the earth is divided into parcels (*ti-fang*), each with its own overseer (cf. p. 98). This personage is generally called *Tu-ti* (Earth God). Images of wood, clay or metal, of him and his family, are set up in small temples, or on covered altars standing by themselves. Such "Earth Altars" and little local temples are therefore seen everywhere in China, in city and country.

The local "overseers" are grouped under greater "officials" (all spirit beings). In the case of cities they are called *Cheng-fang* ("City God"), and in the country districts *Ti-fang* ("God of the Locality"). These "gods" are enthroned, with wives,

children and servants, in stately or simple temples (*Cheng-fang-miao* and *Ti-fang-miao*), and great festivals with processions are annually arranged in their honour.

Buddhism has allied itself with these ancient local sanctuaries, and has particularly through them secured a powerful hold upon the common people. For it is clear that precisely in respect of these guardians of justice people have need of the great priesthood of Buddhism, which by means of masses and other sacred acts of worship can come to the defence of a humanity laden with sin and guilt. It is significant therefore that just in these "City Temples" and "Temples of the Locality" scenes from the torture chambers of hell are presented in sculptured forms.

(5) As the fifth diversion of the wheel of *Karma* comes the category of evil spirits or devils (*oh-kwei*). Here are included those creatures which have sunk so low that their very desire is toward the evil, and which therefore willingly permit themselves to be used by the more "professional devil lords" as their helpers in all sorts of measures of destruction and torture. But even among them there are many grades. Most numerous are the "hungry spirits", which unrelenting and unblest fly about through the endless spaces of the region of death. Their number is immense, for most of the evil people on earth become recruits for this restless and hungering multitude when the thread of their life is severed. As we shall see later, there must therefore be special efforts made to reach these hungering spirits, for they will otherwise go over inexorably to the army of professional devils, which are hardened in evil and disfigured with hideousness (*je-tsa* or *loh-tsa*).

(6) Finally we have the Animal Category, or *Chou-seng*. This lies lowest in "the ways of evil", and is recruited from the worst criminals and malefactors on earth. They change at death to various kinds of animals, according to the character of their sins, and they may become horses or cows, wolves or tigers, and even serpents or insects. Numerous writings and pictures in China deal with this gruesome transformation: showing, for example, how the skin of the beast gradually covers the human body, or how the eye loses its human light for that of the beast.

With regard to all of these divisions it must be noted that none of them is of absolutely eternal duration. It may involve endless *kalpas*, figured according to number and duration in such a way as to defy description; but the final result is nevertheless the "salvation of all that lives", because slumbering in all living beings there is a "Buddha seed"!

In more detail the course of life is described as follows: It is divided as a whole into three periods, which again form a

cycle of wider movement. The first period of the present era began with Sakyamuni Buddha, and continued till 500 years after his death. This is *Cheng Fa*, or the "Period of the True Law". The second period is reckoned from 500 years after Sakyamuni till the year 1000, and is called *Siang Fa*, or the "Period of the Figurative Law". During that time it was necessary to penetrate to the truth by means of images and books.

From 1000 to 3000 after Sakyamuni comes *Moh-Fa*, or the "Period of the Final Law". Sin and suffering increase so enormously that even Buddhism seems to go under. But behold! *Matreya* (*Milefo*) then comes forward with his millennium. A new cycle of life will then begin, with salvation for all that lives. So shall the cycles follow, one upon the other, until "every living thing has been set free".

Against this background it may be understood how beautiful was the sound of Mahayana Buddhism's gospel of salvation. Besides the great Buddha (*Siddhartha*) a great many other pious persons have through the ages attained to holiness. These Holy Ones (*Bodhisattvas*) and the Completely Enlightened Ones (Buddhas) may by worship be moved to help men gain release. In order to make this worship really vivid, the Mahayana school introduced the system of images of these saints. And to make the connection easier, temples were in addition furnished with a whole staff of priests. Through a previous monastic life these priests are supposed to have ascended some way up the ladder of redemption, at least to have become *Arhats* (*lo-han*).

This is the justification of image worship. Here is the apologetic for cloisters and priests, for temples and masses for the dead.

But when worship had been established it was quite natural that these saints should come to be called "gods" (*shen*). This was in full accord with the development of thought in China. In this way it came to pass that Buddhism, which in the beginning knew no god and had no worship, came to present to the Chinese a multitude of new divinities, and a whole new system for making them real to the people.

The Buddhist system of thought which we have so far sketched gradually permeated large areas of the Chinese people. Even the Confucianists, who fought this "foreign teaching" with every available weapon, did not escape the contagion of this view of life. The records show that down through the centuries there have been high officials, and even emperors, who have been warm adherents of Buddhism.

The reason is that there was one point at which the most un-



compromising Confucianist sensed an immeasurable emptiness in his system, and it was just here that Buddhism seemed to offer the greatest help. It was in the matter of filial obligation toward parents who had died. There had been some speculation about purgatory, a hell, about the possibility of transition to repellent forms of existence. Buddhism brought certainty. Anxiety for the dead increased with this certainty. It made filial duty weigh more heavily than ever.

But the same new teaching offered new hope. By means of the priesthood it was possible to make contact with the perfect spirits—the saints, and through their mediation the beloved dead could surely and speedily be liberated from the pains of purgatory, hell, and continued rebirths.

Thus it was that Buddhism in China came in the course of centuries to be the great haven of refuge, to which all classes of society came seeking for release, even those who theoretically were hostile to the whole system. Only in this way can it be explained how the Buddhist church again and again rose out of the ruins as soon as the storm of persecution had passed.

#### THE ETHICS OF BUDDHISM

In the matter of ethical teaching there was not much that even the official religion could criticize Buddhism for. Buddhism taught such a high standard of ethical conduct, and proclaimed it with such emphasis that it was quite unique. It is true that moral conduct was always presented as a means to attain redemption, never as a saving means in itself, and still less as a loving obligation toward a supreme God. But this made no difference in the eyes of Confucianists.

A strong impression was also made upon the population of China by the care shown by Buddhists for plant and animal life. No life must be destroyed, no flower crushed, etc. The reason is clear: these various forms of life are often nothing but souls in transition. With the Chinese the foremost thought was naturally of ancestors.

In this way the vegetarian tendencies in China received a strong impetus, and so among otherwise heartless people there developed at least a minimum of sympathy for animals.

Although Buddhism did not in the beginning oppose the eating of meat as a matter of principle, it soon developed to the point that vegetarianism became a leading characteristic of the whole system. In the eyes of the common people it was regarded as a mark of holiness that monks so energetically refrained both from meat and from marriage. And that is still the case to this

day, in spite of all the ways in which the rule is circumvented. Officially the Buddhist priesthood stands in sharp contrast to the Taoists, who both marry and eat animal foods.

There are many pious and learned monks spread about in the large cloisters who have reached a high level of religious inwardness and piety. As a rule these live a rather retired life, and the result is that one sees more of the poorer sort.

But otherwise the moral life of monks and nuns is in many places on a low level. The most shameless vices spoil the life of cloistered fellowship in many places, and serious moral lapses tend to give the whole Buddhist community a bad reputation. We shall see later how the Buddhist church itself has sought through outward arrangements to bring about reform in this matter, and to heal the wounds which such weaknesses have caused.

#### THE BUDDHIST SYSTEM OF MONKS AND NUNS

It will be clear from what has been said already that Buddhism is a strongly monastic religion. In reality it is only the monks (and the much fewer nuns) who, together with the so-called "Home Buddhists" (*Chü-si*), constitute the Buddhist church. They are monks (*ho-shang*) because they have left the world, in order to seek their own salvation through continuous worship in the solitude of the cloister. They are priests when they are called to minister to humanity at some temple, and so mediate the salvation of others.

It is ordinarily required of those who are to carry out this priestly service that they have spent a certain time at one of the larger monasteries having the right of ordination. During the golden age of Buddhism in China it seems that all who wished, in unlimited number, might enter the monasteries, all of which had the authority to ordain. But this was soon changed. The Confucianist-minded emperors and officials saw with severe disapproval that the strength of the nation was being wasted in this way. Measures were therefore taken, in the form of decrees and regulations (apart from the persecutions), whose purpose was to limit entrance into the monastic life to a minimum.

The following was the most effective regulation, and it is still in force: Only certain of the older, larger monasteries, with good reputation, should have the right of ordination. Furthermore, each ordained monk or priest might have only one disciple (*teu-ti*).

This latter rule intimates that it is mainly from the youth that the Buddhist community is recruited, and this is in fact the case. Only a few are permitted to enter the monastic life in mature

age. And it is among these few that most of the "black sheep" of Buddhism are to be found. One explanation is, that criminals often seek concealment in this way. Such depraved characters do irreparable damage in the cloisters; it is in reality *Varg i veum* (wolf in the sanctuary).

The common practice, then, is that one begins his monastic life during childhood or youth. Most often it is in a cloister, where each pupil is assigned to an older ordained "master" (*si-fo*), who has a father's power and a teacher's authority over him. But a neophyte may also receive his training from priests in one of the temples, the course being finished off with a longer or shorter stay in one of the larger monasteries, where the ordination takes place. Such a young monk is appointed to serve with his old master, for the priestly service is usually inherited.

What is it that drives these many young boys away from home and loved ones, from companions and games, into the serious and gloomy atmosphere of the monastery? I have often put that question, as I have stood in the court of some monastery, surrounded by a whole crowd of twelve- or fourteen-year-old boys, dressed in Buddhist monastic garb. "Mother was ill", said one; "Father was plagued by the demons", said another; "Our clan has for a long time suffered from misfortunes", explained a third; "My horoscope (*pa-tse*) revealed that I should have no offspring", answered a fourth.<sup>1</sup> But one here and there might also reply: "I entered the monastery to get light upon life's way and to prepare myself for dying".

Among the older monks, especially, there is often a deep earnestness. A few go so far as to have the door of their cell walled up, and they live there in continual worship, shut off from the world till their last hour. Their food is handed in to them through a little opening without the exchange of a word; they are already "dead to the world" (*p'i Kuan*).

Burial in the Buddhist monasteries is always by cremation. The ashes are often gathered into urns and placed in rows in the burial chamber. Occasionally a very serious monk, when he feels the approach of death, may ask his monastic brothers to bind him to a stake and burn him alive. Such a heroic death gives him the greatest possible certainty of immediate entrance into Nirvana. Sometimes a pyramid is built over the urn of a famous monk.

The desire for offspring is deeply rooted in the Chinese. This

<sup>1</sup> Children are often purchased to be the property of the monastery. In other cases sickly children are dedicated to the monastery to make them well.

is evident also among the Buddhist monks. Cut off as they are from continuing their line in the ordinary way, they are the more anxious to find a worthy adoptive son—*i.e.*, a pupil. In many respects the pupil enters into a completely filial relationship to his master. Absolute obedience is required. The pupil often comes to the monastery in infancy. Care and nurture then devolve upon the master. In return, he has assured himself a helper in all future trials, one who can nurse him in time of sickness, and one who will be specially careful to read masses for his soul when death has come.

The little Buddhist candidate is dressed in monastic garb, and the head is completely shaved the very first day. But training does not begin before the age of seven. Parts of sacred formulas, passages from *sutras* (discourses), and long series of monastic rules are memorized. The neophyte also receives some training in reading and writing, but all limited to the field of Buddhist ideology.

Along with the theoretical instruction goes the practical training. The young members of the community are assigned their definite tasks, particularly such as are connected with the daily worship. Through daily presence at the services of worship they become thoroughly acquainted with the various ceremonies. It is quite remarkable to see with what precision the young boys come in at the proper place in the services of worship, which are often very long.

The rule is that a youth shall have reached the age of twenty before his consecration. But in practice it has worked out so that ordination comes at a much earlier age. There are also supposed to be considerable intervals between the various steps in ordination, but for practical reasons they have come to follow quite closely the one upon the other.

The consecration begins with the formal acceptance of the youth into the neophyte class. This takes place as a rule in the fourth month (May), about the time of the festivities in honour of the birth of Buddha. The youth kneels before the Abbot, and in the presence of the other aspirants he declares his desire to be received into the Community (*Sangha*). He further expresses his penitence for all sin, and takes Buddha to witness that he will hereafter keep the Five Great Commandments. These commandments forbid (1) the killing of any living thing; (2) stealing; (3) unchastity; (4) lying; and (5) indulging in intoxicating drinks.

As a neophyte he is now permitted, after a short interval, to take the vows that bring him in upon the first stage of monasticism.





In addition to the prohibitions already mentioned, five other commandments are now added, to whose observance the youth pledges himself in solemn phrases: to abstain from (1) flowers and perfumes; (2) from song and dance; (3) from the use of large (comfortable) beds; (4) from taking meals at irregular times; and (5) from the acquisition or possession of any property of value.

Thereupon follows a general declaration of willingness to renounce the world.

At this point the neophyte is received into *Sramenera*, the lowest order of monks; he has become a *dewa*, or saint of the lowest class. In token of this he is given the monk's habit and the beggar's cloak (*Kashaya*; Chinese, *Giasha*).

Consecration to the second stage of monkhood is a more solemn proceeding. It is carried out after an interval of two or three days in the following manner: Eight of the most prominent monks, headed by the Abbot, gather with the young novices in the main hall. The Abbot sits upon a raised seat directly facing the main entrance, and the assisting monks stand in two rows, four on each side. The novices are arranged in groups, and one of the monks asks them privately whether there is anything to hinder them from entering the order of mendicant monks.

They are then brought before the whole officiating group. One of the monks asks the members of this group if they are willing that these novices shall be accepted. Their silence signifies their willingness. The Abbot then addresses to the novices the question whether they are willing to submit in full obedience to the 250 monastic rules (*pratimoksha*). After this the Abbot speaks to them, emphasizing the importance of the step which they have now taken. The whole is ended with a benediction.

Now they are *Sramana*, or *Bhikshu* (Chinese, "*Pi-kiu*")—i.e., ascetic monks—and on the ladder of holiness they have reached the second rung. They have become Arhats (Chinese, *Lo-han*). They receive the begging bowl (Chin., *poh*) as the outward sign of this attainment.

Next day comes the last and greatest act of consecration, which is peculiar to the Chinese monasteries. From *Sramana* they are now brought right up to the highest monastic rank. They become "Exalted Ones" (Chin., *Ho-sang*), and in point of holiness attain the rank of *Bodhisattva* (Chin., *Po-ti-sa*, abbreviated, *Po-sa*).

This act of ordination is much longer and far more impressive than the others. The service begins with an act of confession and penitence before the statue of Buddha. This is followed by the

cleansing of the body, and the donning of new apparel. In connection with this they go through the long litany of propitiation. Petitions to three hundred Buddhas are intoned, in which they are implored for compassion and help now in this great hour of consecration. In exceedingly impressive word and music phrasing the monks promise to observe the fifty-eight commandments of Brahma's Net (*Fan-wang-ching*).

Still another sacred act takes place in the temple hall. This is the sacrifice to the Holy Triad (*Triratna*): Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha; and the taking of the special Bodhisattva vows: (1) To lead all beings without exception to salvation; (2) to seek to put an end to all pain and suffering; (3) to purpose studying the works of the innumerable teachers; (4) to seek to perfect oneself so as to attain the highest glory of the Buddhas.

During the various ceremonies the ordinands frequently prostrate themselves (so for each of the 300 Buddhas as the name is pronounced), or kneel on prayer stools, and with movements of the arms and the head indicate that they are with holy reverence approaching the Buddhas in worship.

But the most serious act is yet to come. For it is written in one of the ancient *sutras* that the sign of complete devotion in Buddhism is the willingness to bear the greatest pain. One must be willing to let tigers devour one's limbs, etc. In conformity with this idea has been developed the practice of burning holes in the forepart of the head at the time of ordination. Some even let a finger be consumed by fire to the honour of Buddha.

Little cylinders of charcoal are fastened with wax to the skin of the smooth-shaven head, in groups of 3, 6, 9, 12 or 18. The charcoal is lighted and becomes red-hot. The wax melts, and the glowing charcoal sizzles and burns down into the tissues of the head. During this process the ordinand repeats the name of Buddha continuously. This is often most like a shriek of pain. One of the older monks holds the head of the young novice between his hands, and presses the temples with his thumbs to deaden the pain.

After having received in this way for all time the "mark of Buddha upon his body", and in the presence of all the saints having pledged eternal loyalty, the ordinand receives from the lips of the Abbot the declaration of the full status of monkhood.

It is noteworthy that, among the vows and admonitions, the obligation to proclaim salvation for all creation occupies the highest place (*Mahayana*). But in practice one sees little of this public preaching. It is true that in the larger monasteries there are one or two monks whose special duty it is to instruct lay

people in the way of salvation, but even this is limited to the lay folk who live in the outer courts of the monastery, and whose work is connected with the institution, as artisans, cooks, tenants, etc.

A minute organization of the monks is found everywhere. At the top is the Abbot, who is called *Fang-chang* or *T'a Ho-sang*. As a rule he lives at the rear of the group of buildings in a very attractive room. He is often a man "with a degree"—i.e., he has taken one of the higher examinations, and therefore possesses learning. He has a special garb (red stripes in his monastic robe) and (especially during worship) a staff in his hand, set with precious stones.

Next in rank is the so-called *Tao-chien*, who as Prior reports to the Abbot concerning the progress of affairs. Of the same rank is another Prior, called *Shou-tso*. These two are the heads respectively of the two main groups into which the monks of the monasteries are divided—the "Eastern Group" and the "Western Group". The *Tao-chien* with his Eastern Group takes care of all the monastery's practical matters, such as book-keeping, reception of guests, the kitchen department, repairs, stores, the clothing department, etc. Each of these divisions has its head. The Western Group, headed by its *Shou-tso* and *Veiloh* (instructor), cares for all matters connected with the worship. There are many of these, daily and periodical, in connection with festival and memorial days.

According to the oldest regulations, there should be six services of worship a day. They are now usually limited to three. The morning service is held at the first break of day. The other two services come at midday and evening.

One of the oldest monks leads the worship. He stands facing the altar, often with an assistant beside him. The assisting monks are divided into two groups, who face each other part of the time, and part of the time the altar. Important *sutras* or formulas, with praise or prayer content, are read in monotone, or are chanted. This is determined by the leader. At certain intervals the two groups strike up music with their instruments, or fall in with passages of song.

The instrumental music is an interesting mixture, of bells, drums, cymbals, tambourines, etc. A highly characteristic effect is produced by the strokes upon the "wooden fish". This is a much used "instrument", which consists of a hollowed-out wooden block in the form of a fish (*Mo-yr*). As the sacred symbol of continued watchfulness ("The fish never sleeps"), this simple instrument plays an important part in Buddhistic worship. (Whether we have here a parallel to the ancient

Christian symbol, *Ichthys* (fish), and whether there is any connection, has not yet been determined.)

During the worship there are frequent bows and kneeling upon prayer stools. An offering is usually a part of the ceremony. Rice and tea are brought and placed upon the altar, and the leader, with mystic movements of the fingers, divides the offering among the hungry ghosts.

Among the periodic festivals "fast days" (*tsai-yi*) have an important place. There are four of these every month. And then there are the regular festivals of the first, fifteenth, and last days of the month. The various birthdays of the great patrons of Buddhism, of famous saints, etc., are observed with special services. This is also true of the beginning of the various seasons—New Years' memorial days for the "hungry spirits", etc. Special misfortunes and calamities may be brought to the notice of the monks, who then arrange a special service of worship. Of this more later.

The individual monks of the "Western Group" have in addition much to do in keeping the incense burning day and night in the halls of the monastery. In a large monastery (with 200 to 300 monks) this may require a whole staff of workers. The incense rises from straight sticks of incense set upright in the ashes of incense bowls, or from cleverly constructed spirals which are hung from the ceiling before altars and images. As the fine threads of smoke rise into the air the incense is consumed, and therefore constant supervision is required.

Even throughout the first hours of night the worship must continue. From tower or temple hall comes the steady tolling of the brazen bells, living testimony that some monk is standing there with his rosary, telling his beads in prayer for the lost souls in Hades.

Strange as it may seem, it is still true that at each of the larger monasteries there is one who takes care of the ancestral tablets. The Confucian influence is so strong that not even the Buddhist monasteries can wholly exclude it. Accordingly the practice has developed of having a special room where the tablet for the soul is placed when a monk dies. Here there are offerings and prayers in a thoroughly Confucianist manner. Lay people often desire to have the tablets of their loved ones placed in the monasteries. These are kept in a special room, and regular services of worship are held there. "Monastic families", with their novices and fathers through many "generations", also have their tablets there.

It should also be mentioned that some kind lay people bring fowls, fish, and small domestic animals to the monasteries, in



order that the souls which are bound in them may by the prayers of the monks be liberated from their animal existence and be saved. This is the explanation of the phenomenon that one often finds fish ponds, goose ponds, and parks for small animals in connection with monasteries.

The monks partake of three meals a day. Simple but nourishing vegetarian diet, consisting of rice and a great variety of vegetables fried in vegetable oil—this is the regular menu. The monks are called together into a large dining hall by strokes on the “wooden fish”. There is a short hymn of grace before and after the meal. One of the youngest takes a few kernels of rice and places them upon a stone pillar out in the open court. This is an offering out under the open sky for the hungry spirits. Otherwise there is a profound silence during the meal. Two of the monks go about with rice kettle and vegetables, and each fills his bowl out of them.

The monks’ cells are usually quite attractive—whitewashed and light, with comfortable bed, a table, a couple of stools, often a small bookcase, and a number of scrolls decorating the walls. There is almost always a flower in a little vase on the table, below the bust of Amitabha.

The prohibition against “large beds” and “adornments” has practically fallen by the wayside in China. Only a few special ascetics give up all these comforts.

Besides the monks, already mentioned, who have themselves walled up in their cells, there are also other ascetic practitioners. The most prominent of these is that of the mendicant monks. Their numbers have been steadily decreasing.

Next in importance are the hermits. These generally erect some very crude shelter (*mao-p'ong*, from which the name *Chü-p'ong-ti*—hermits) in lonely places in the neighbourhood of monasteries. Or they may live in caves. The expense of their frugal living is borne by the monastery or by private people in the neighbourhood. These hermits are often “hard to look at”. Hair, beard and nails grow untended; they never wash, and they grow to look more and more like wild men.

Through constant fasting the body becomes greatly emaciated. When death comes there is therefore nothing left but “skin and bone”. Sometimes these skeletonized bodies are embalmed and overlaid with copper or gold, or some similar material, and set up in the temples as gods. This is what the Chinese call *Rao-shen* (flesh gods).

Finally we would mention the arrangement about hours of meditation, which is practised especially in Central and South China. This was introduced into China from India by Bodhi-

dharma in the year A.D. 520. This leader strongly opposed literary studies. Everything should come through meditation. His school became strongly established, especially in Central China.

In opposition to him the Honanese Chi-Kai and his school strongly emphasized literary studies along with meditation (the Tien-tai School).

In some monasteries the hours of meditation have been entirely abolished. They are found now only where there is a special desire and effort to maintain the old regulations. Here one sees a large hall furnished with a sloping platform and benches along the walls. It is called *Chang-tang*. The monks assemble in this hall at stated hours. They sit with legs crossed and eyes half-closed, like living statues of Buddha. They remain seated in this posture for long periods at a time, wrapped in metaphysical contemplation (*Ta tsoh*). At intervals the instructor speaks up, and at a given signal they all leap to their feet. They start running around the hall in circle formation, and continue at increasing speed, until at a given signal they again settle themselves for meditation.

#### THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

In the course of time Chinese Buddhism has also developed a number of widely differing "schools" or "divisions" (*tsung*), which again have their subdivisions (*pai*). We shall not here enter upon a detailed discussion of their variations. Nor are these so great but that the inner unity is always recognized. This fact is given practical expression in the hospitality which the monks show toward one another. A Buddhist monk can travel without money through the length and breadth of China with short days' journeys, getting free meals at the temples and free lodging at the monasteries. The only provision is that he must not stay for days without special invitation. There are monks who are tempted by this arrangement to a life of continual wandering (*Ye-ho-shang*—"wild monks").

The arrangement of the life of the nuns is much like that of the monks, only on a much smaller scale. The Chinese nuns (*Ni-Koh*) have a robe very little different from that of the monks. It is therefore often difficult to distinguish them from monks, specially if one cannot see the feet. These are usually crippled in the same way as the feet of ordinary Chinese women. This fact is usually due to the circumstance that a large number of the nuns enter the cloister at a more mature age. Poverty, sickness, or misdeeds often drive them to take this step. The

last-mentioned cause is very common, and the result is often a continued life of wickedness, which again is highly demoralizing for the regard in which the nunneries are held. The individual nunneries are administered from the head one of the section.

We shall proceed to give a brief presentation of the various divisions and "schools" within Chinese Buddhism. The divisions presented by the famous Chi-Kai are mainly of theoretical interest. He arranges the Buddhist community under four main divisions, according to the lines of inner development:

- (1) *Tsang-chiao*—the Hinayana School;
- (2) *Tung-chiao*—the Transition School;
- (3) *Pieh-chiao*—the Mahayana School;
- (4) *Yuen-chiao*—the Final School.

This classification answers in part to the ingenious harmonizing arrangement which Chi-Kai introduced in the second half of the sixth century. He saw with deep sorrow how Chinese Mahayana Buddhism threatened to become a complete chaos of conflicting systems. Even Bodhidharma's great and inclusive system, the School of Meditation, had not brought the solution.

In the beginning Chi-Kai was strongly influenced by Bodhidharma's methods, but later, on account of his intellectual bent, and his desire for clarity, he was driven to seek another solution.

His principle was that the discourses and traditions of Sakyamuni point to five great periods in the Master's life, wherefore Mahayana's classical and highly varied scriptures should also be classified in the same way. Each one of these scriptures belongs accordingly to one of these five periods, in conformity with the lines of development in the life of Sakyamuni.

1. The first period covers the first three weeks of Buddha's activity, after he had received his enlightenment. During that time he gathered about him all the *Bodhisattvas* and heavenly beings, and explained to them his great and all-inclusive teaching. This is what is found in the voluminous scripture, *Fa-Yen-ching* (Sanskrit—*Buddhava-tamsaka-mahavaipulya-sutra*).

2. When Buddha realized that his lofty teaching could not be grasped by ordinary people, he began to simplify his system, mainly proclaiming the "Four Truths About Suffering and Salvation from Suffering", and the truth of the "Eight-fold Way". Those who follow these directions attain to the status of *Arhat*. This period covers the next twelve years of Buddha's life, and its teachings have their literary expression in the Hinayana scriptures.

3. When the Master became aware that his disciples fell into the misunderstanding that the whole truth was contained in the

above-mentioned *Hinayana* scriptures, he hastened to assure them that he still had immensely much more to enlighten them about. What they had previously heard was only an introduction to the truth. Now they were to have the privilege of entering that enlightenment which not only made them personal saints (*Arhat*; Chinese, *Lohan*), but by which they might become co-workers in the great work of salvation in the world: they should become *Bodhisattvas* (*Po-ti-sa-toh*, or *Po-sa*). This period covers the next eight years, and corresponds with the scriptures which are peculiar to Mahayana.

4. When Buddha's disciples heard these high and spiritual truths unfolded, they soon came to the conclusion that the ordinary man could not possibly grasp them, and that for him, therefore, there was only one way of salvation open, that presented in *Hinayana*. Buddha had therefore to use the next twenty-two years of his life to clear away this misunderstanding. In this period he showed that *Hinayana* was only a preparatory stage, a first vehicle which should carry the true believers up to the higher realm of thought—*i.e.*, into Mahayana. The main writing in which these teachings of Buddha are presented, and where we find the teachings of Mahayana crystallized and simplified, is called *Ta-pan-yo-ching* (Sanskrit—*Mahā-praṇga Paramita Sutra*), the book concerning the great wisdom.

5. Finally, when Buddha had reached old age, at seventy-two, he began discoursing the highest and deepest teaching, to the effect that every individual can attain Nirvana. For this very purpose he had himself come down to earth, and taken upon himself the pain of rebirths, in order that he might proclaim this universal salvation. These teachings are gathered up in the famous Lotus Scripture, the favourite book of Chi-Kai and the Tientai School. This writing forms the keystone, and is therefore the most important book of Chinese Buddhism (*miao-fa-lien-hua ching*).

The preceding is of theoretical rather than practical interest. In practice Chinese Buddhism is divided into the following "schools":

(1) The *Tien-tai School*, founded by Chi-Kai, which from the sixth century to the present time has had such a powerful influence, on account of its scholarly bent and its all-inclusive and tolerant basic view. Its main writing is the Lotus Scripture.

(2) The *Hsien-shou School*. This was founded by the monk Hsien-shou, or Fa-tsang, third patriarch after Wenshu (Manjusri's incarnation on Wu-tai-shan, in Shansi). The school still exists in North China, but has entirely disappeared in South China. Its main scripture is *Hwa-yen-ching*.



(3) *Lü-tsung*, the great Law School, with its centre on the famous Pao Hua-shan—"Precious Flower Mountain", near Nanking. Here we find Buddhism in its most markedly austere and ascetic form. There are only two meals a day, and no drink but tea. The monks are usually dressed in dark robes. This school is widely represented in the coast provinces. The Law Scriptures are naturally its main writings.

(4) *Tzu-eng-tsung*, the School of Grace and Mercy, emphasizes especially the merciful spirit, as its name implies. This school was founded by the monk Chieh-hsien, on the basis of the philosophical writing, *Wei-shih-lun*. It uses a special procedure for meditation. It has no great following at present.

(5) *Tsing-tu-tsung*—the "Pure Land School" (Japanese—*Jodo*). This is one of the oldest schools, and also at present one of the most widely extended. It gathers about it in a remarkable way many of the religious élite of China. It has also in some degree taken up social problems on its programme.

Since it is here that we find the *bhakti* form of Mahayana Buddhism, and at the same time a remarkable correspondence with Christianity, we cannot help but give this school a more detailed treatment.

It was a Chinese, *Hui-yuen* (333-416), previously a Taoist monk from Shansi, North China, who became the founder of this school, though under another name, that of *Peh-lien-chiao*—the White Lotus Religion.

Equipped with a deeply religious temperament, trained in the rich thought content of higher Taoism, and driven by an immeasurable desire for authentic knowledge of the super-sensory world, he found satisfaction for his religious need in Mahayana Buddhism.

He soon became a leader within the Buddhist community. He first lived on Lü-shan, in Kiangsi, and at the foot of the majestic mountain range he founded the monastery Tung-ling-SSu. A temple has been built upon the old ruins, and an ancient pagoda near by still marks the place where this ancient dreamer was permitted to gaze into the sanctities of life.

In 373 we find him at the height of his activity. He was then settled in the Lu-feng monastery, in the province of Hupeh. Pilgrims flocked to him, and along the borders of the famous lotus ponds was founded the school which was destined to have such great influence upon the religious life of China. From this circumstance came the name the "Religion of the White Lotus". The freer and more spiritually minded monks gathered about this school down through the centuries, and it also went

through a quite unique development, both inwardly and outwardly.

Particularly in the period from the seventh to the eighth century the school seems to have received many new impulses. These may largely be credited to the special cultus and trend of thought connected with the Vairochana School (the "Great Sun Religion"). Mohammedanism, which came into North China early in the seventh century, may possibly have had some influence. But most important of all was Nestorianism, which just at this time had its great period of development in a number of China's provinces.

We cannot here give any detailed presentation of this process, but refer to the writer's work: *Truth and Traditions in Chinese Buddhism* (particularly chapters 4, 5, and 6), where this matter is fully discussed, and also to the work of Professor Saeki, *The Nestorian Monument in China*.

The Nestorian influence may have been specially strong at the following points:

The trinitarian trend of thought was further strengthened and developed, in that *Amitabha* is presented as "the Merciful Father of the Ten Heavenly Regions". Together with him appear Ta-shih-chi, the Most Mighty, and *Kuanyin*, the compassionate spiritual power; and these stand side by side as the rulers of the "Western Paradise" (*Hsi-fang-chi-loh-si-kai*), to which they will draw "all that lives".

The *Amitabha* ideology was developed along more monotheistic lines.

Furthermore, there appears a growth in the understanding of the solidarity of the human race; and under the influence of the impressive Nestorian ceremonial of prayer for "the living and the dead" came the increasing tendency to make the masses for the dead more striking and effective.

The mighty concept of faith had already been introduced into Mahayana. Cf. Asvaghosa's famous book *Chi-sin-lun* ("Awakening of Faith"). In the "Pure Land School" this was further developed:

Instead of painfully seeking salvation by the way of law fulfilment and sainthood by works (*Karman*), there was now given a gospel of salvation through inward faith, and sincerely calling upon the name of *Amitabha*.

Instead of using up one's energy of soul and mind in the study of Mahayana's immense collection of scriptures, in order to find salvation (*Ynana*), the learned and unlearned could now gather about the name which was above every name, *Amitabha*, and be saved.

In place of seeking to win peace through wearisome meditation (*Yoga*), the soul might immediately find a haven, and through faith commit itself to the most intimate love communion with the deity (*Bhakti*).

No wonder that this school at all times, and particularly from the twelfth century on, and very specially in more modern times, has appealed to such great numbers.

From the twelfth century on it becomes easy to follow the development of the school, especially in the many poems and chants which appear, and which are still used in the daily ritual of the mass by all the various groups within Chinese Buddhism.

The large and well-known ritual book *Chan Men er Sung* (daily masses of the Meditation Group), which is much used also at the present time, is simply filled with such poems and chants taken directly from the "Pure Land School".

It is in a purely spiritual way that the "Pure Land" has gained the ascendancy in so large a degree over Chinese Buddhism. Outwardly there are no great indications. In only a few places (as in some of the coast provinces) are temples and monasteries to be found where the external arrangements are also fully in accord with the teachings of the "Pure Land".

But the compensating fact is that the spiritual influence is so much the stronger. This is the source of the many liturgical passages and litanies which have more or less clearly received their inspiration from Hui-yuen's famous *Song of the White Lotus*, discovered a number of years ago in the monasteries of the Chekiang mountains:

### THE SONG OF THE WHITE LOTUS, OF THE PURE LAND IN THE WEST

(A rather literal prose translation of the beautiful poetical rendering in the Norse.)

WHAT language can tell of the beauty and power  
Which adorn that pure and shining land?  
That land where flowers fade not for age,  
Whose golden streets shine as crystal pure water.  
The land which rises in lofty terraces,  
Blazing with diamonds, and gleaming with jade;  
Whose dwellings are fragrant leafy bowers;  
Where Utpala lotus freely unfolds.  
Oh, list to the songs from hill and from dale,  
The Allfather's praise from the birds of the air.

No country is found so blissfully happy  
As this land of purity far to the west.  
There stands Amitabha in shining apparel;  
Prepares for the festival, never to end.

Up from the abyss each human soul draws he,  
 Lifts them in to his palace of peace.  
 For lowest creature, transformation completed,  
 Loosed is it now from the body's deep pain.  
 As gift it receives now a spiritual body,  
 Which shines in the garden of spirits redeemed.

Ages go by in unbroken procession,  
 Without interruption of winter or spring.  
 The fading of sunshine no more brings its terror,  
 Storms of the winter long since are forgot.  
 Clouds filled with light, and the green-breasted forest,  
 Now rock all things in to enduring peace.  
 The soul now is freed from the coverts of darkness,  
 And rests with assurance in places of truth.  
 Lo, all that on earth was misty and hidden,  
 Now owned and acquired, for all things are plain.

And who is it, now heard with such grace in his speaking,  
 Who sends forth his smile to the suffering world?  
 And who is the one, like the sun in his glory,  
 Whose mercy is offered for vict'ry and life?  
 Yes, God is the one, and on his throne seated,  
 He sends out his law to loose from all pain;  
 With arm gold encircled, and crowned with his jewels,  
 He sends forth his power over sin, tears, and death.  
 Lo, no one there is like our God in his power,  
 And none can requite his mercy and grace.

In connection with these songs from the "Pure Land" school we must also mention the prayer which is particularly characteristic of this school, and which has made its way to all the other schools. It is the prayer, *Nan-mo O-mi-to-fo* ("I flee to thee, Amitabha." "Praised be *O-mi-to-fo*"). It is the "Our Father" of the Buddhists, and it goes as a mighty chorus from South China up into Manchuria, and from Japan and Korea to the borders of Siberia. Into this prayer are poured all the need and longing of the soul, the burden of pain and despair, and the song of thanksgiving and praise.

Buddhist monks greet one another with these words, and lay people mumble them, heartily or mechanically, at work and at worship. They come as a recurring refrain in the mass, and they are repeated several thousand times a day in the religious processions through corridors and temple halls. They are engraved in stones to keep down the demons, as well as upon ornaments, and they are written and printed in papers and books. They are gathered up in the great formula of devotion, which in its more complete form is: *Kwei-yi Fo, Kwei-yi Fa, Kwei-yi Seng*—"I devote myself to Buddha, to the Teaching, and to the Church".



For these reasons *O-mi-to-fo* is one of the most sacred concepts of the East Asiatic consciousness. It is the symbol of personal sincerity and harmony, in that one's inner being is absorbed in God, and thereby reaches its goal. For, *O-mi-to-fo* is for the Buddhist of depth and piety not only a term for "deity", but also the expression of reunion with the highest and the absolute, *Fo* (Buddha).

Such a luminous and buoyant faith leads in the case of deep and true natures to great inner joy. Therefore the "Pure Land School" has been like a quiet murmuring spring within China's Buddhism, where so many and varied systems of salvation, and so many gloomy shadows from animism, tend to darken the souls of men.

On the other hand, deviations and aberrations have not been lacking. Many of the adherents of the "Pure Land" have slid out into a barren, God-forsaken philosophy, and still more have suffered the harm of "sinning upon grace", as they have comforted themselves with the thought of Amitabha's mercy, while they were wallowing in sin and shame.

On this account there has from time to time been quite a strong reaction against the followers of the "Pure Land". They have been called "easy travellers", who, without possessing the necessary theoretical knowledge, and without earnestness of soul, take the highest and holiest expressions upon their lips.

But there is seldom anyone who has the courage to make a real attack upon the ideological content of the school; the "Pure Land" teachings are too clearly laid down in its classic sacred scriptures. It caused a great deal of offence, too, when in the fourteenth century political and revolutionary organizations also began to appear under the name "The Religion of the White Lotus". It brought the people of the school into embarrassing complications, and the result was that they adopted another name, the present one—*Tsing-to-tsung*, or the "Pure Land Group".

Attention should also be called to the fact that many of the nuns adhere to the "Pure Land Group". This might naturally be expected, both on account of the temperament of women, and also on account of the wretched social conditions from which many of the nuns have come. They have the feeling that they have need of the great compassion if they are to be saved. And then it is not so easy for them to acquire all the book learning necessary if they are to come in under the other schools. For them the "Pure Land's" "short cut" way to salvation is more than welcome.

One cannot help being moved by the evident sincerity with

which many of them devote themselves to "calling upon the name", and there can be no doubt that many are saved from the deepest social lapses and the most terrible sort of life by faith in the grace of Amitabha.

On the other hand, when one remembers the conditions from which most of these nuns come, it is surely not to be wondered at that there were also many lapses, and that dark clouds are occasionally cast over the Buddhist community in general, and over the "Pure Land" group in particular, from aberrations of monks and nuns.

As previously mentioned, the "Pure Land" School is quite strongly grounded because it has a definite collection of scriptures to point to. Of first importance are the Great and the Small *Sukhavati Vyuha* writings, and next the so-called *Amitayur-dhyana-sutra*. The larger *Sukhavati Vyuha* writing is generally known in China under the name *Fo Shuoh Wu-liang-shou-ching*—"Buddha's Discourses on the Boundless (eternal) Life". The lesser writing is generally called *O-mi-to-ching*—"The Amitabha Scripture".

Both are very widely used, in private worship and meditation, as well as in the general worship of the mass. Especially the last mentioned writing, which in a way is only a compendium of the preceding one, is used a great deal at evening mass in the temples, and in the masses for the dead outside, and in the homes.

At a great gathering in the "Kingdom of Seih-oei", in a garden called *Chi-shü-gi-ko-tu*, Buddha reveals the great gospel of the saving grace of Amitabha. The heavens and the earth, Hades, and all the abysses resound with joy when they hear of the great vows which will make it possible for all creation to find release from sin, sorrow, punishment, and pain, and be born into *Sukhavati* (*Hsi-fang-chi-loh-si-kai*), the Western Paradise.

In richly descriptive language the "Western Paradise" is pictured, with figures strongly reminding one of Rev. 21 and 22. It is a veritable oriental heaven, filled with glittering jewels and treasures, and sprinkled with beautiful groves and fragrant trees, from which the songs of birds are continually heard. Immense lotus flowers are everywhere. All sin, conflict, and pain are gone, and, attended by the most glorious music, the inhabitants find rest in the shade of trees along the banks of rivers of still waters.

In this writing we are also given the classic explanation of who Amitabha is. Before he became a Buddha he was a Bodhisattva by the name of *Dharmakara*. Through his vow of salva-

tion for every living thing he gained so much merit that he became the "Buddha of Boundless Life and Light". As such he continues the great work of salvation, drawing all creation in to the "Western Paradise".

As already indicated, the "Pure Land" School is the most popular and active element in the religious life of the East. It is as if some of the most precious heritage both from Taoism and the Nestorian Mission had in part been crystallized in this religious form. And the movement of modern missions has undoubtedly had a highly stimulating effect, so that a large number of religious and philanthropic activities have been initiated by the adherents of the "Pure Land" in later years, especially in Japan. It is an incontrovertible fact that of all the Buddhist schools only the "Pure Land" has had the spiritual power and elasticity to enter into this noble competition.

*Tsing-tu-tsung*, together with the other four divisions within Buddhism which have been mentioned, are often called *Chiao-men* (religious groups), as distinguished from the School of Meditation with its many *Tsung-men* (sub-divisions).

The other schools are:

- (6) *Chü-she-tsung*.
- (7) *Cheng-thih-tsung*.
- (8) *San-lung-tsung*.
- (9) *Mi-tsung*, or *Chen-jen-tsung*.

All these four schools are now completely absorbed by

(10) *Chang-tsung*, the Meditation division, Bodhidharma's famous school. This school became divided, through an unnoticeable process, into a northern and a southern branch. The southern showed the greater vitality, and has since given birth to a number of smaller divisions. These are sometimes also called *Tsung*, and complications have thereby arisen. The proper designation is really *Gia* (homes or families). Their names are: (a) *Hui-jang*, (b) *Lin-chi*, (c) *Ts'ao-tung*, (d) *Jün-meng*, and (e) *Fa-yen*. Of these *Lin-chi* and *Ts'ao-tung* are best known.

*Lin-chi* is particularly famous. It began in the province of Shantung in the ninth century, and gained much influence among scholars. The reason for this is that the leaders of the school held that man has in himself the powers that are needed to attain sainthood, and can himself shape his fortune and overcome all obstacles, if he can only gain the right view of man's essential nature. This teaching comes very close to the views of Confucius, and a Confucianist could therefore very well engage in meditation on this basis.

Many of China's monasteries and monks in our time therefore like to emphasize the fact that their "home" is connected with the *Lin-chi* School. Even the officials of the old school adopted the Buddhist rosary as a part of their official costume, to show that they were connected with the "Religion of the Learned". (Cf. also the reformed movement among modern Confucianists, who advocate at least a half-hour's meditation before beginning their official duties.)

Among the schools that have been absorbed by the School of Meditation (*Chang-tsung*), we must briefly mention the mysterious *Mi-tsung*. It absorbed the aforementioned *Vairochana* School, known in China from the seventh century on by the name "The Great Sun Religion" (*Ta-jih-chiao*). The main writing for this movement was "The Great Sun Scripture" (*Ta-jih-ching*).

The worship was concentrated upon *Vairochana*, the doctrine's representative (Chinese—*Pi-lu-che-la*). Many of the attributes of Amitabha were ascribed to him, but on his own account also he gained much of the charm of saviourhood. In particular it was believed that he has special power to help the lost souls in Hades.

Unmistakably some of the teachings of the Nestorian Church have gone into this system. On the other hand, Nestorianism also sought to adopt some of the outward characteristics of the "Great Sun Religion", the more easily to make its influence felt. It is clear that the official Chinese name of the church (*Chin-chiao*), "The Religion of the Great Light", is an allusion to the *Vairochana* School. The character for the adjective *chin* is composed of the characters for the sun, as well as for "great" and "shining", a designation which for the people of that day must have directed the thought immediately to the "Great Sun Religion". But as both of these religions flourished about the same time, so they also had a parallel experience in time of persecution and decay. The *Vairochana* School was taken up in the other schools, and now for many years it has therefore been difficult to find traces of its special characteristics. Even in the best monastic libraries one has to look long and carefully to find the old *Ta-jih-ching* (The Great Sun scripture).

#### BUDDHIST MONASTERIES AND TEMPLES

It is characteristic of Buddhism that it always seeks the most beautiful locations for its temples and monasteries. So it has done in India and Burma, in Ceylon and Japan, and so also in



China. The most charming hillsides, beautiful river islands, arresting sites on river banks, narrow mountain passes, and, above all, mountain tops—all have in the course of time been occupied by temples, monasteries and pagodas. Even when temples are built close in to towns (which is preferably avoided) they seek by tree-planting, etc., to make the place as inspiring as possible.

As we shall see later, Buddhism in China has often wedged itself in where there has been a feeling from ancient times that there was holy ground, and in this way the monks have established a firmer hold upon the people. The concepts of "monastery" and "temple" are not very clearly distinguished among the Chinese. Thus the largest monasteries are often named from the point of view of the place of worship. Then it becomes *miao*, or *seng tien*. But if the location is regarded as the dwelling-place or training place of monks, the specific Buddhist terms are used—*ssu-yüen*, or *an-tse*, and the main term *tsung-ling*.

In this connection it must also be mentioned that the various Buddhist temples are classified under varying forms of administration. Most of them are *sī-ti*, which is to say that they are self-owned, and are administered by the leading monks of the neighbouring Buddhist monasteries.

In addition there are many that are *kong-ti*—that is, "public". These are local temples, owned by the locality in which they are situated. The people of the place choose a board of directors, *Miao-huei*, which in turn chooses a chairman, *sou-tze*. All current business is taken care of by this board, while sacrifices and worship are left to the monk or monks appointed to the temple.

Finally, there are a great many temples which originally had no connection with Buddhism, but which in the course of time have come to be "manned" by Buddhist monks. There are thus a number of sanctuaries of the official religion where this is the case, as, for example, the various temples of the city gods (*Chen-fang-miao*), or the temples of the Five Sacred Mountains (*Wu-yo*). In all such places one often sees Buddhist monks busy with offerings and worship. More about this later.

Many of the temples, and especially many of the monasteries, are very rich. Through the centuries considerable gifts of money have been made to these monasteries. Most often these gifts have been invested in rice fields, and a monastery may own vast areas of this kind of property.

These oldest and wealthiest monasteries also rank the highest in moral strength and seriousness of purpose. Not being dependent upon the alms of pilgrims, they have no need to lower

themselves to the kind of humbug often practised by the poorer temples in order to "draw a full house".

Monasteries vary greatly in size, and the same is true of the real Buddhist temples. But the plan is the same everywhere, even though in some places parts of it may be left out for lack of space, or for economic reasons. With regard to the temples, those parts are naturally left out which in the monasteries are occupied by the cells and private rooms of the monks. In describing now the various parts of a monastery, we choose one of average size.

It is a more than ordinarily beautiful sight to see a Buddhist monastery in the distance after, perhaps, a rather strenuous climb. Up the slope of the hill lie the long rows of buildings with their curving architectural lines. The whole is surrounded by a fairly high wall, and this, together with the whitewashed buildings, and the luxuriant bamboo groves and other leaf-bearing trees, gives a complete picture of harmonious beauty.

As we approach the monastery we see in large characters over the main gateway its name and designation.

Going in through this main entrance, we now find ourselves inside the outer wall. Here gardens and formal park arrangements come into view, with pools covered with lotus plants (the lotus being the favourite flower of Buddhism, the flower of purity). Going through another large gate we find ourselves in the first main building, where the temple halls begin.

Entirely cut off from this, rows of lower buildings run back along both sides. These contain the cells of the monks, the kitchen, dining hall, storerooms, etc. These smaller side buildings are joined at the back of the temple buildings to form the higher and more elegant part for the Abbot and Prior, and the library. In this library (*San tsang-lou*—the building for the Three Treasures, the three parts of the canon) the sacred scriptures are housed; these are sometimes a gift from the imperial house.

In the larger monasteries there are three temple halls. The first is called the Entrance Hall, or "Hall of the Four Great Heaven Kings" (*Sih Ta Tien-wang*). These are the keepers of the monastery. Then comes the main hall with the many images. This is usually called "The Precious Hall of the Great Hero" (*Ta Hsiung Pao Tien*). Finally, farthest back, comes "The Hall of the Law" (*Fa-tang*).

In addition to these there is often found a Hall of Meditation, special room for the common people and for notable guests. High towers with large bells are often to be seen among the buildings. In the various stories of these towers there are also

images and altars, and constant watch is kept to maintain the incense offerings and the bell ringing.

The many small open courts which separate the buildings are beautifully furnished with trees and potted plants. Everywhere one turns it is neat and clean; the lofty halls lend an air of majestic solemnity, and this, together with the well-kept condition of the whole, gives a very pleasing impression.

Many of the oldest and most characteristic of the monasteries were destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion, such as a number located on Lu-shan, near Kuling, in the province of Kiangsi. The famous monasteries built around "The Western Lake" (*Hsi hu*) at Hangchow were overtaken by the same fate.

But Buddhism in China can still boast of many fine old building enterprises. The monasteries located on the Tien-tai mountain range, in the province of Che-Kiang, are specially famous. There is, for example, the monastery Kao-ming-ssu, where the robe and begging bowl of the famous monk Tsu-kai are shown as an attraction.

But those enjoying the very highest regard are the following four: (1) Pu-to-shan, (2) Chiu-hua-shan, (3) Wu-tai-shan, and (4) O-mi-shan.

The first of these is located on an island in the Chusan Archipelago, a little east of the city of Ningpo. It is a very city of monks, and it requires an enormous number of buildings to house them and the many thousands of pilgrims that gather there every year. The place is sacred to the "Goddess of Mercy", *Kwanyin*, of whom more later.

Chiu-hua-shan, in the province of Anhwei, is also truly notable, in spite of the destruction wrought during the Taiping Rebellion. This has probably the most beautiful surroundings of all. Here *Ti-tsang*, the conqueror of hell, is enthroned in full majesty. There is also a splendid pagoda in his honour.

Wu-tai-shan is located in the province of Shansi. This is a meeting-place for Mongols and Chinese. For this reason Thibetan lamas are active side by side with the Chinese hoshang. Prayer wheels may here be seen, which is rarely the case in China proper. The place is much sought by pilgrims. It is sacred to the well-known Bodhi-Sattia, *Wen-shu*.

Finally we have the great collection of temples and monasteries on the top of Mount Omi, in the province of Szechuan. From the steeply rising mountain there is a breath-taking view of far western China's fruitful plains and mighty mountain ranges. In the imposing old buildings the bronze figure of Pohsien occupies a prominent place.

The old, but exceedingly well-kept monastery, Wei-shan,

held a place of great importance in the Buddhism of the province of Hunan. As the ordination centre for the province, and as the monastery with strict regulations, it occupied a dominating position. Now it has been completely destroyed during the disorders and civil wars of the latter years.

In the province of Hupeh we have the large and imposing Kwei-yuen-si, near the city of Hanyang.

Nevertheless, it has latterly been a difficult time for the old monasteries. The new China needs many schools, and funds to support them. It was therefore natural to cast eyes upon the temples and properties of Buddhism. Here were buildings, and here were resources that might be used! In many places the old monasteries have therefore been shorn of much of their holdings, and many of them have had to offer the use of their facilities. The new age and the new demands made themselves so strongly felt that even tolerant Buddhism had to do something special.

#### ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

The attempts at reform which have been made in these latter years must be viewed against the background here given. The conviction has been forced upon the leaders, with increasing power, that the Buddhist community would be left far astern in all sorts of ways if the monks were not helped to make some intellectual and ethical progress.

Special Buddhist schools have therefore been established, where the younger monks might receive some training in secular studies (geography, history, mathematics, etc.). Teachers have been called in, particularly from Japan, and these, who themselves were warmly devoted to Buddhism, have in some places laboured with good effect. They have especially sought to enthuse the youth for the religion whose servants they have become with or without their own knowledge. Specially prominent monks have also been brought over from Japan to the monasteries, in order by "model masses", etc., to infuse more life and action into the whole situation.

Many attempts have been made to improve morals among the monks. In earlier days it was a common sight to see the temple priest lying on his bed with the opium pipe in his mouth. In other respects also the moral standards were often low.

Christian Missions have exercised some of the most stimulating influence upon the Buddhist community. Two tendencies are noticeable in this matter: tolerance that often goes as far as open admiration of the practical fruits of Christianity, and, on the other hand, the new anti-Christian tendency from Japan,



which sees in Christianity a rival, and even the most dangerous foe.

In connection with this latter movement there has come up a new apologetic for Buddhism. In this apologetic are used both the cold scepticism and the exuberant mysticism which are so characteristic of the orientals. This apologetic defence concerns itself primarily with the extensive pantheon of Buddhism. This we will now proceed to examine. The leading monk in this reformative endeavour has been the learned Tai hsu.

#### THE BUDDHIST PANTHEON

We have already mentioned the circumstances that, according to the thought of Mahayana Buddhism, "the Holy Ones" (Dewas, Aarhats, and Bodhisattvas), and in a still higher degree the "Completely Enlightened" (Buddhas), are able to help people forward to salvation. Therefore they are gods (*Shen*), according to the Chinese way of thinking, and men are to worship them, and offer sacrifices. According to pure Buddhist thought, they are much more than *Shen* (gods), in that they have got beyond the limitations of the causal chain (*Karma*).

It seems that Buddhism, even in the beginning, had brought to China images of several of the most prominent Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas*. These figures were well done, in many respects real works of art.

*China therefore received from Buddhism the first impetus towards the artistic production of god images.* And the Chinese soon carried the matter just as far as their foreign teachers. Tremendous figures of bronze, clay, iron, or wood, covered with gold or silver-painted or gilded, have since been produced in China. Then there were the house gods, and the ordinary temple gods which now were sculptured—an artistic tendency affected it all, and "god-making" (*tiao-hiang*) became a fully developed industry.

The first religious act takes place during the actual process of making the image, in the opening of the pupil of the eye. It is called "Light Opening" (*Kai-kwang*). As the figure now is given over, with a brief formula of worship, to the spirit which it represents, it is thought to become living and active (*ling*). This is often accomplished in a still more drastic manner, by the introduction of a serpent or other creeping thing into the interior of the figure, through an opening in the back, which is then closed up as quickly as possible.

From the viewpoint of art this image-making activity has produced its finest results in the various Buddha figures, primarily in the chief figure of the historical Buddha, but also

in the representations of Kwanyin and the other prominent divinities in Buddhism. No one who has stood gazing at these figures, with their noble facial lineaments, and the half-closed eyes, which reflect a wonderfully deep inner peace and harmony, could help being strangely moved. Seeing these figures tells better than many words what there really is in the Buddhist dogma of Nirvana, and in the concept of "buddha".

In the same degree one is repelled by the many brutal figures, which in the Taoist manner represent the forces of judgment and retribution.

Of course the Chinese look upon all images as first and foremost visible symbols of the invisible spiritual forces behind them. But the same psychological process has been going on in China as in the rest of the world: the image can coalesce with the respective spiritual entity, so that in looking at the image one seems to see the god himself. This process works the more easily in the Chinese mind because, as already mentioned, the spirit of the god is by a special religious act introduced into the image (*fo-liao*).

As we now proceed to consider the individual divinities it is natural to begin with the historical Buddha (*Fo*). As previously mentioned, he is most often called Sakyamuni (*Shi-gia-mu-ni*) in China.

We find him represented in several different ways. Usually he sits upon a lotus vase with feet crossed under him, and the arms hanging freely. The hands rest upon the up-turned soles of the feet. The eyes are half-closed, for the position is one of deep meditation.

All the facial features are Indian, but strongly influenced by the ancient Greek Apollo type. A jewel often gleams in the middle of the forehead. The large ears are very characteristic; the lobes of the ears often hang down to the shoulders. The swastika is frequently seen upon the breast; it is the ancient symbol of cosmic unity, inner peace, and holiness (Sanskrit—*Sphastika*; Chinese—*Wangtse*, or *Sin-yin*). In the background is set up a wooden carved and gilded nimbus—*yuen-kwang*, as the Chinese call it.

Less frequently standing Buddha figures are found. In North and West China, however, Sakyamuni may be seen in upright position, represented as an ascetic, with long, unkempt hair and beard, and dressed in rags. The position is half-standing, half-kneeling.

Buddha's entrance into Nirvana is always indicated in China by the sleeping position. He is represented as lying on a large Chinese bed (*Shui-fo*).

Occasionally one may come across Buddha in the form of a little child. This is based upon an allusion to the words which legend has placed in the infant Buddha's mouth: "I am now born for the last time."

The image of Buddha is placed in the main hall behind the principal altar. Occasionally it stands alone, but more often together with other figures. These are frequently the most beloved disciples, Ananda and Kasyapa, whose somewhat smaller images are placed a little forward. The former is known by his broad smile and somewhat advanced age.

Or, the figure of Buddha may stand between two similar statues—*Fa* (The Doctrine) and *Sheng* (The Church). This means that "The Three Precious Things" are represented (*San Pao—Triratna*). The abstract concepts of "Doctrine" and "Church" are personified respectively in *Vairochana* (*Pi-lu-fo*) and *Loshana* (*Lu-shih-fo*), while *Sakyamuni* naturally represents the idea of "Buddha". This is accordingly the representation of the "Threefold Body of Buddha" (*Trikaya*): *Dharmakaya*, *Shambhogakaya*, *Nirmanakaya*.

Another grouping is that in which Buddha is placed together with *Amitabha* (*O-mi-to-fo*) and *Bhaisa Yuaguru Vaidurya* (*Jo-shih-fo*).

#### FIRST DIVISION: THE BUDDHAS

Among the gods of Buddha rank the heaven group occupy the highest place. Here we have, besides the historical Buddha, first of all the God of Healing, *Bhaisa Yuaguru* (*Jo-shih-fo*). He is naturally much appealed to in cases of sickness. Of even greater importance, however, is *Amitabha* (*O-mi-to-fo*). He plays such an important part among the Chinese that we must discuss him in a special section. Here we will mention only the fact that he is easily recognized in his upright position by the immensely long arms. As the one who leads people in to the Western paradise, the Chinese have given him the title of honour, *Cheh-yin-fo*—i.e., the Buddha who Receives and Guides.

The two other heavenly Buddhas, *Vairochana* (*Pi-lu-fo*), and *Loshana* (*Lu-shih-fo*), are differentiated by the following characteristics: The former has his hands joined over his breast, with index fingers pointed upward. The latter has his right hand resting in his lap, while the left is held against the breast, with the tips of the thumb and middle finger touching.

Among the monks these Buddhas play a considerable rôle, but not in the thought of the people.



"The Shining Buddha" appears far less frequently in the temples. This is Buddha Dipamkara (*Yuan-teng-fo*), whose whole body is covered with constantly burning lamps (108 in number).

Curiously enough, the "Buddha of the Future", *Maitreya* (*Mi-le-fo*), is not included in this group. This very jovial figure, who always meets people with a smile upon his well-nourished face, must content himself with being a guardian god. In his right hand he holds a flower, while his left encircles the opening of a bag in which the future's five gifts of fortune are found. The robe is cast aside, revealing the mighty chest and the well-rounded abdomen.

## SECOND DIVISION: BODHISATTVAS

The famous *Bodhisattvas* (*Po-ti-sa*, or *Pusa* for short), who have attained the next highest rank in development, make up the next main group of Buddhist god figures. They might also, if they so desired, pass on to the full dignity of Buddhahood. But out of regard for the creatures which still groan under the gloomy conditions of transmigration, they choose to remain in the position of "world saviours", in order the better to help the suffering. They have *po-ti-sin*, the compassionate heart, while the light of true wisdom and worthiness also shines from them. Wherefore, also, the very sight of them inspires in all men, who have the root of goodness in them, a noble desire for holiness and sacrificial love.

We shall mention here the five best-known *Bodhisattvas*, corresponding to the five heavenly Buddhas:

(1) *Kwanyin*, the Indo-Thibetan Avalokitheshvara, the deity that gives ear to them that cry, and bows down to the suffering. Because she, together with Amitabha, plays such a mighty rôle in East Asia, we must devote a special section to her.

(2) *Ta-shih-chih*, most often thought to be Mahasthana-parapta in Sanscrit. Tradition often places him side by side with Kwanyin as Amitabha's son. It is certain that he, together with the two figures already mentioned, is included under the concept *Hsi-fang-san-seng*, "The Three Western Holy Ones", and always connected with the thought of the Western Paradise. In this character he receives, especially in the Pure Land School, the highest Buddha ranking, that of *Tathagata* (Chinese —*Ru-lai*, "He that appears thus"—the pattern).

Corresponding to this concept an expression has been formulated in Chinese for the latent, that which has not yet appeared, but which is the basic spiritual norm. This is *Chen Ru*, and may



be translated "The True Pattern". It is like an echo of the Neo-Platonists' statements about a spiritual realm of ideas, and a revealed kingdom of that which has been materialized; or, transferred to the highest concept, God: a hidden God behind the existing universe (*Chen Ru*), and a revealer of God, *Ru-lai*: Immanuel—God with us.

Otherwise there is nothing more said about *Ta-shih-chih* than that he has once for all broken the chain of Karma, and thereby made it possible for all creation to escape from the rotation of the wheel. As his name signifies, he is "The Most Mighty". Therefore, also, he has been able to accomplish the greatest act of redemption, making it possible for all creation to be liberated. But Kwanyin is the only one who can mediate this salvation to the individual, and she therefore takes on something of the character of the Spirit.

(3) *Wenshu* (Sanskrit, *Manjusri*) represents wisdom. His bust may be recognized from the particular beast which he rides, the lion. (In Buddhism the roaring lion is always the symbol of wisdom.) Tradition has it that *Wenshu* went to the province of Shansi, and that he lived on the picturesque Wu-tai-shan.

(4) Together with *Wenshu* is always mentioned the fourth *Bodhisatva*, *Pu-shien* (Sanskrit, *Samantabhadra*), the representative of compassion. He always rides upon a huge elephant, and for his place of activity in China he has chosen the famous O-mi-shan, in the province of Szechwan.

(5) As the fifth great *Bodhisattva* is generally named the great and merciful spirit of the region of the dead and the lower world, *Ti-tsang* (Sanskrit, *Kshi-tigarbha*), "The Abdomen of the Earth", or "The Earth's Treasury". But *Milefo* may also occupy this position. However, he is generally named among the "Guardian Gods". We shall therefore first deal with *Ti-tsang* at this point.

In the Buddhism of India he does not seem to have played any great rôle. Quite otherwise in China, where he in the same manner as *Manjusri* and *Samantabhadra* has been "nationalized".

Tradition has the following to say: Under the emperor Chih-Te (ca. 754 A.D.), of the Tang dynasty, the Korean royal prince *Chiao Kioh*, of the family of *Chin*, left the empty life of the world and became a monk. As such he set out on his travels and came to China. He came up the Yangtse valley accompanied by his faithful white dog. Near the city of Ta-tung he came upon the beautiful mountain group, *Chiu-hua-shan* (The Nine flowery Mountains). Here he settled and decided to live in meditation.

As he sat there on one of the mountain tops the people became aware of a strange light over the mountain, and it was understood that a saint had come to the region. His future was thereby assured, as disciples and pilgrims began to seek him.

For seventy years he sat on the same spot in meditation. And lo! in the sixteenth year, in the seventh month of the year called *Kai-Yuen*, he attained to the great illumination. He was then ninety-nine years of age.

A minister by the name of Ming, who was warmly devoted to Buddhism, was able to bring it about at this time that the whole mountain group was handed over to *Chiao-Kioh* and his disciples for possession and ownership.

By the time of his death the great monk had accordingly laid the foundation for one of Buddhism's most central and sacred places in China, the *Chiu-hua-shan*, which became so famous, and is now covered with monasteries, temples, pagodas and lodging houses for pilgrims. His departure from the world was fittingly miraculous. He sank slowly down through one of the clefts in the mountains; he became *Ti-tsang*—the Earth's Treasury.

The cleft is still shown, and the millions of pilgrims who annually visit the place can, after special preparation, obtain a glimpse of the lower world through the mountain cleft. For it was thither that *Ti-tsang* went, in boundless compassion and love, to the lost whom he now would save.

There in Hades *Ti-tsang* has established a real preaching service. Unceasingly he preaches the "law of salvation" for the wretched ones, and as this noble task of his is supported by pious people on earth, and then most of all by pious monks and nuns, who know how to perform the masses for the dead, the lost ones are released in "countless hosts".

A special writing called *Ti-tsang Pen Yuen-ching* (*The Book of Ti-tsang's Basic Vows*) has been composed in his honour. This writing, together with the *Book About the Dish* (*U-nan-pen Ching*), is constantly used in the masses for the dead.

*Ti-tsang* has thus become the great *Bodhisattva* of Hades, and as such deals with all those who have been shut in upon the "Iron-grille Mountain" (*Tieh-wei-shan*) in the 18 great hells, the 500 smaller, and the 1,000 little hells (*Ti-r'ao*). Punishment is administered by the great overlord *Tung-yoh*, and his viceroy *Yen-loh*. The latter corresponds to the *Yama* of Hinduism, and is specially feared. Under *Tung-yoh* are the eight tormentors and the supreme tormentor, *Yen-loh*. The names of the tormentors are: *Tsou-kiang*, *Wu-kuan*, *Pin-t'eng*, *Pien-cheng*, *Tai-shan*, *Tsin-kwan*, *Tsong-ti*, *Tou-si*, and *Tüan-luen*.

Over against these fearsome ministers of justice it is that *Ti-tsang* has to appear, mediating, protecting, and challenging. But more profoundly considered, the salvation consists in his implanting in the hearts of the miserable ones holy longings (the "root of goodness", as it is called), so that they after endless ages (*chie*—Sanskrit, kalpas) start on an upward movement.

The bust of *Ti-tsang* is of remarkable beauty, with purity and compassion delineated in the countenance. Above his statue often appears the inscription, "Lord of the Underworld".

Special temples are built in his honour, and always in connection with the great bronze bell, called *Yu-min-chung* ("The Bell of the Gloomy Vale of Sorrow").

In the larger temples there is often a special chapel, with *Ti-tsang's* bust by a little altar. At this altar a monk sits or kneels, reading *Jeu-min-ching* (The Book of the Gloomy Vale of Sorrow). At regular intervals he pulls a rope, and a wooden ram strikes a heavy blow upon the great bell. The deep, powerful tone, with its sombre quality, carries far through the night. It is as if it would carry the message of sympathy and hope into the land of shadows. This is one of the many glimpses of the fundamental spirit of sympathy and compassion which so often meets us in Chinese Buddhism. In its simplicity this act is often more deeply moving than the more artfully developed public masses, which are often spoiled by commercialism and dark demon cultus.

### THIRD DIVISION—ARHATS (CHINESE—"LO-HAN")

Within this large group are first to be reckoned Buddha's first ten great disciples (*Shih-ta-ti-tse*): (1) *She-li* (Sariputra), (2) *Mu-lieng* (*Maha Maudgalyayana*), (3) *Moh-ho-sia-shi* (*Maha Kasyapa*), (4) *Ah-na-lü* (*Aniruddha*), (5) *Hsü-pu-ti* (*Subhuti*), (6) *Fo-lu-na* (*Purna*), (7) *Kia-chang-gien* (*Katyayawa*), (8) *Yu-po-li* (*Upali*), (9) *Koh-loh-loh* (*Kohula*), and (10) *Ah-nan-to* (*Ananda*).

A less important rôle is played by the twelve disciples who had not yet wholly attained to the great clarification, the so-called *Yuen-kioh*.

In passing it must be noted that in the course of time there has developed an essential distinction between the "Holy Ones" (*Lo-han*), and those beings who press forward toward the *Bodhisattva* state, a distinction corresponding to the characteristics of *Mahayana* and *Hinayana* Buddhism. The term *Lo-han* came to be applied to the devotees of *Hinayana*, who in their

secure self-satisfaction were concerned only for themselves, while a *Bodhisattva* never wearies of sacrificing himself for others.

A subtle irony is reflected in the fact that it is considered an insult when the monks call each other *Lohan*. The same characteristic is also illustrated in some of the scrolls depicting the famous group of the Eighteen *Lohan* (*Sih-pa-lo-han*).<sup>1</sup>

This host of choice individuals, representing the most villainous robbers as well as the best people, all saved by the grace of Buddha, still bear in large measure the disfiguring marks of sin.

Following are the Eighteen *Lohan*: (1) *Pin-tu-lo-po-lo-toh*, (2) *Kia-jo-kia-fa-tsoh*, (3) *Sou-pin-toh*, (4) *Jo-chü-loh*, (5) *Kia-jo-gia-po-li-toh*, (6) *Po-to-la*, (7) *Kia-li-gia*, (8) *Fo-to-loh*, (9) *Shu-po-gia*, (10) *Pan-to-gia*, (11) *Loh-koh-lo*, (12) *La-kia-si-la*, (13) *Yin-Ye-to*, (14) *Fa-lo-po-si*, (15) *Ah-si-t'o*, (16) *Chü-cha-pan-to-gia*, (17) *Chin-jen*, (18) *Pin-tou-lu*.

In some of the larger cloisters and temples may be found a huge hall of the "Five Hundred Saints" (*Wu-peh-lo-han*), called the *Lohantang*. It is like a great sculpture museum, and huge sums have been spent upon them, for each of the 500 figures is quite large, and, as a rule, gilded. The most varied physiognomies are found there, ranging all the way from the most noble appearance to the most villainous criminal types. Some have claimed to find a bust of Marco Polo, the famous traveller of the Middle Ages, in this remarkable collection.

As a rule, the Patriarch Group is also included in this division. Six are reckoned as "Fathers", or "Patriarchs" in the more restricted sense. First of the group is the previously mentioned Indian Bodhidharma (Potitamo), who came to China A.D. 526, and there founded the School of Meditation, of later fame. He was the twenty-eighth after Buddha, and is counted as the first of the Chinese. With him the centre of gravity of Buddhism moves from India to China.

After *Bodhidharma* they come in the following order: (2) *Shen-kwang*, also called *Hui-ko*, (3) *Seng-t'san*, or *Chien-chih*, (4) *Hung-jen*, or *Ta-man*, (5) *Tao-hsien*, or *Ta-i*, (6) *Hui-neng*, or *Ta-chien*.

The Fathers are worshipped in a special hall which is called *Tsu-tze-tang*—Hall of the Fathers. Especially their birthdays are commemorated in an elaborate way.

<sup>1</sup> In Japan "Sixteen *Lohan*" are mentioned.



## FOURTH DIVISION: KIA-LAN, OR TUTELARY GODS

Here we meet a motley array. There are first of all the twenty-four *Dewas* (*Chü-tien*), who are ranged twelve on each side in the main temple hall.

A few are found as independent "deities" in some capacity, as—e.g., the leader of them all—the mighty *Wei-to*, and the "Four Heaven Kings". In addition, there are the Indian gods *Brahma* (*Ta-Fang Tien-shen*), and *Indra* (*Ti-shih Tseng-shen*), and *Yama*, the Chinese *Jen-loh Tien-tse*, the much-feared judge in Hades. Confucius, *Wenchang*, the god of literature, and the war god *Kwan-shen* are also included here. Inside the outermost doorway stand two fear-inspiring door gods (Generals) called *Heng* and *Ha* (*er Chiang*).

Following are the twenty-four *Devas*: (1) *Tseng-chang Tien-wang*, (2) *Jen-loh Tien-tse*, (3) *Kien-tsai Tien-shen*, (4) *Sin-Kung Tsen-tien*, (5) *Po-ti Shan-nü*, (6) *Moh-I Tien-shen*, (7) *Wei-to Tseng-shen*, (8) *Er-Kung Tien-shen*, (9) *Ta-pao Tsai-shen*, (10) *Kung-teh Tseng-shen*, (11) *Ta-Fang Tien-shen*, (12) *Chü Kwoh Tien-wang*, (13) *Kuang-Moh Tien-wang*, (14) *Lung-wang Shui-shen*, (15) *Fo-gia Loh-wang*, (16) *Ah-li To-wang*, (17) *Kwei-tse Mu-shen*, (18) *Mo-le Wen-tien*, (19) *Kien-lo Ti-Ti-shen*, (20) *Lje-Kung Tseng-tien*, (21) *San-ti Tien-shen*, (22) *Mi-chi Tseng-shen*, (23) *To-shih Tseng-shen*, (24) *To-wen Tien-wang*.

A sub-division of this group is made up of the Eight Great Guardian Angels, or Cherubim (*Chin-kang-shen*), who are spoken of in the introduction to the "Diamond Scripture". They represent eight different aspects of the being of Buddha, and are named: (1) *Chin-chü-tsai*, (2) *Pi-tu*, (3) *Huang-seih-kiu*, (4) *Peh-tsin-sui*, (5) *Chi Seng-ho*, (6) *Tin-si-tsai*, (7) *Tsi-shien*, (8) *Ta-shen*.

While these eight Cherubim represent the authoritative, powerful, and majestic aspects of the Buddhas, there are four other figures of Buddha which represent sympathy, compassion, love, and generosity. They are the four well-known *Chin-Kang Po-sha*, *Tsi*, *Pei*, *Hsi*, and *Shae*.

We have mentioned the most common "gods" of Buddhism. But in addition to these there are innumerable hosts of known and unknown Buddhas, *Bodhisattvas*, *Mohosa* (Great Masters), and Saints. It is like the "atoms, or motes in the air", and when they gather for the great arrays, when the Buddha is to explain the law of salvation, the whole universe is filled with an inde-

scribable glory and illumination, and "a peace which covers the highest peaks of the Himalayas".

It is therefore quite common to find a special hall in the monasteries, in which walls and ceiling are covered with gilded heads of Buddha. It is the *Wang-fo-tang* ("Hall of the Ten Thousand Buddhas").

In the same spirit the worship of all the Buddhas (*Po-fo*) is often closed with the following little refrain: *Nan-mo tsin-t'sin ta hai chung pu-sa* ("Hail to you, ye pure and peaceful Bodhisattvas round about in the great ocean!").

In this connection may also be compared the usual formula of dedication:

*Kwei-i Fo,  
Kwei-i Fa,  
Kwei-i Seng.*

"I dedicate myself to Buddha; I dedicate myself to the Doctrine; I dedicate myself to the Church" (or the Fellowship).

#### AMITABHA AND KWANYIN

*Amitabha* (*O-mi-to-fo*) is king of the "Western Paradise", the "Land of Blessedness" (*Sukhavati*), (Chinese—*Hsi-fang-chi-loh-shi-kai*). He is "The Eternal One", full of loving-kindness and grace, truly a favourite god in all Eastern Asia.

In time of sickness and loss, in calamity by fire and water, when attacked by robbers, or in the anguish of death, he is the refuge sought in prayer. And this prayer is very brief. It consists simply in the naming of his name. The oftener and the more earnestly his name is called the more certain one can be of salvation.

That is the reason for this brief formula of prayer, *O-mi-to-fo*, or (gathering up all the regulations, expressions, and gods of Buddhism) *Nan-mo O-mi-to-fo*.<sup>1</sup> This prayer form, which is heard with such utter frequency in the East, in temple and cloister, on street and highway, in the home and upon travelled ways, is practically the "Our Father" of Eastern Asia.

If a father and mother would secure their child against the cunning attacks of evil spirits, they have a bracelet made for the little one with the inscription *Nan-mo O-mi-to-fo*. In order to secure speedy salvation for one who has been drowned

<sup>1</sup> The meaning is: "Glory be to Amitabha Buddha". *Amitabha* means endless. Perhaps the origin is to be found in Persia, where he is called *Mithra*, or *Zervan Akarana*. He is boundless in light, in life, and in mercy.

or murdered, and, furthermore, to secure the *place* where the crime was committed, or the accident befell, against continued assaults of the demons, a stone marker is placed there with the inscription *Nan-mo O-mi-to-fo*, and so on. That is why one so often comes across such stone markers along rivers and gloomy byways.

It is also impressive to see the frequent illustrations in books and on placards and scrolls, showing *Amitabha* together with *Kwanyin* guiding the "*Ship of Salvation*" (*Giu-seng-tuan*) over the "*Sea of Sorrows*" toward the shore of Paradise. Men and women sit securely in the ship; others are half drawn up out of the billows, and still others are yet some distance from the ship, and in their distress stretch out their hands toward the sail, upon which are the words *Mi-to* (short for *O-mi-to-fo*).

Two things are remarkable as regards the *Amitabha* worship: (1) No sacrifice is needed here, only constant prayer, and the paradise of salvation is attained. (2) This paradise is described as a pure and holy place, and yet filled with sensuous joys. The Nirvana idea is greatly modified.

It is, however, necessary at this point to note the following: Considered in a purely external way, the distance between the distinctive *Amitabha* worship (as, e.g., in the Pure Land School) and the more orthodox Buddhism of the Meditation School seems to be immense, so great, in fact, that they seem like two different religions. Upon deeper consideration, however, the distance separating them does not appear to be so overwhelmingly great. There are many, not only of the ordinary monks, but also of the leaders of the Buddhist community, who upon theoretical grounds defend both of these "ways of salvation", and personally practise them.

The solution is as follows: When a person begins in earnest to worship *Amitabha*, who in himself unites all the Buddhas, there will of necessity be born in him a longing for purity and holiness. He will receive an inner glimpse of the real goal of human life, and begin to be aware of the endless possibilities of progress and growth which lie before him.

This is termed in the Pure Land School *Kai lien-hua* ("Opening of the Lotus Flower"), and is movingly illustrated in the famous nine different "pin" (planes), into which the souls are born. Threads, which are initiative blessings, influences from on high, lead out from the spiritual powers (Buddhas) who are immersed in profound harmony, wisdom and loving-kindness. Among these Buddhas *Amitabha* occupies the central place. Down in the pond where the weak lotus plants with the broad leaves are floating about, buds appear and begin to swell. Upon

the next "pin" the development has proceeded farther, and so upward from one level to another (from one pond to another), until the strongest and most beautiful lotus flower puts out its petals, and finally bears its fruit.

But between these various "pin" are periods of time (*Kalpas*—Chinese, *chieh*), which correspond in length to the familiar time units of the Meditation School with regard to the "salvation of every living thing". The psychological explanation is, that through the "invocation of the name" (*Nan-mo O-mi-to-fo*) one is brought into, and perfected in, the way of salvation, until at last the great discovery is made that *O-mi-to-fo* is not something external, but is simply the realization of one's own innermost being (*Pen-lai-mien-mo*). In the same manner the souls after death will be led in through the temporal, sensuous heavens (*Hsi-fang chi loh shü-kai*) to the essential reality, "To be absorbed in Buddha" (*Cheng Fo*)—i.e., attain to the absolute illumination, wisdom, peace, and harmony (*Nirvana*), where all desire is absent, and one is beyond all the changing circumstance of births and deaths (*Pu seng, pu meh*).

Special cloisters and temples are, of course, built in *Amitabha's* honour. The most famous is the huge group of buildings on the island of Pu-to, near Ningpo.

Side by side with the worship of *Amitabha* is found the *Kwanyin* cultus. Among the Chinese *Kwanyin* is considered a goddess, and all that can be conceived of motherly tenderness and womanly charm is therefore portrayed in her image.

According to her name (properly *Kwan-shü-yin*: the one who hears and receives a cry) she is the one among the gods who is most easily reached; for she has a sharper eye, a more open ear, and a warmer heart for human distress than any other. In addition, she is always able to help, and ready to act. This latter characteristic is often expressed in a gripping way, in that her statue is furnished with "a thousand arms and a thousand legs". There are not literally so many, but one can see that the idea is there. She is then called *Nan-hai Kwan-yin*.

No wonder that she is called the "Goddess of Mercy" (*Ta tsi ta pei-ti Nü-shen*), and that she unquestionably occupies the place of honour among the Buddhist gods in China.

Seafaring folk, travellers, and especially the women worship her with great zeal. As the one who has compassion upon childless wives she has been given the name *Sen-tse-niang-niang*—i.e., The Virgin Who Gives Offspring. Villages may be ever so poor, but they do have a temple in honour of *Kwanyin*. She is often the tutelary goddess of a locality. In such places there are



annually great festivals in her honour, with processions and theatricals. Her birthday is also celebrated with much enthusiasm throughout the land.

Many legends have grown up out of Chinese soil about the origin of this goddess. We will give one of these.—Shortly after the Buddha had set up cloisters for monks and nuns, a royal princess in India was seized with a fervent longing to dedicate her life to ascetic practices. The name of this princess was *Miao-suan*, and her father's name *Miao-tsang wang*. He had two daughters besides her. These two daughters were married, and the father now wanted her to go the same way. To this she was unalterably opposed. She secretly left her home, and after many difficulties reached a convent, where she immediately took up the practice of asceticism.

The enraged father sent out a company of soldiers, who brutally set fire to the convent at night. All perished but *Miao-suan*. The father was punished with blindness. It soon became clear that he could recover only if one would tear out his eyes for him. This *Miao-suan* did, and from that time lived her life in darkness. But at death she was released, and reborn as the merciful *Kwanyin*.

More careful research, however, arrives at a very different conclusion concerning *Kwanyin's* origin. As the records certainly show that she is the son of *Amitabha*, so, also, she can surely be traced westward, all the way to India. Her Indian name is *Avalokiteshvara*, shortened to *Avalokita* ("The God That Looks Down"). There is considerable evidence for her identity with *Sumana*, a god of Ceylon, whose shrine was located on "Adam's Mountain" there. Furthermore, it is probable that the idea of this god's peculiar attributes may again be connected with narratives brought to Ceylon by Sabaen sailors from South Arabia. There was a god there, by the name of *Al-makah*, who was distinguished by the same attributes ascribed to *Sumana* and *Kwanyin*: one who hears and heeds the cries of men.

That *Kwanyin* first became known in the region about Hangchow was no accident, for there was a lively trade connection between Hangchow and Ceylon by means of the large sailing vessels which at that time sailed the Straits of Malacca from the coast of China.

It may also be said that there are still traces in China of the conception that *Kwanyin* is really a masculine god. That is still held in Tibet.

On account of the western characteristics of *Kwanyin* she is naturally regarded as standing in the closest possible connection

with the "Western Paradise", and innumerable are the prayers dedicated to her on that account.

### THE PAGODAS

Buddhism brought to China the peculiar Indian form of architecture known under the name pagoda (Chinese—*pao-ta*). In this architectural form, which in æsthetic regard is exceedingly beautiful and inspiring, some of the deepest thoughts of Buddhism are expressed. They are primarily memorials erected over the relics of saints. But other thoughts are also there. The pagoda is constructed with recognition of the fact that the way to perfection can not really be pictured. As the pagoda rises in circular, diminishing stories, finally ending in the rounded cupola, so the development of the saints has been, on into the completed perfection of Nirvana.

Or, the symbolism is explained in this way: The rectangular platform represents the earth, the semicircular stories the air, and the top part, with the four openings, represents the heavens with the four heavenly guardians.

A characteristic feature is the little bells and copper plates hung along the sides, which tinkle as they are moved by the wind, thus making the "music of the air".

Pagodas are of varying height, from three to thirteen stories (always in odd number). They are not intended as places of worship, but presumably as continual reminders of life's deepest meaning.

As might be expected, these peculiar buildings soon acquired special significance in the camp of the geomancers (professors of *feng-shui*). The explanation was gradually developed, that they had the most pronounced effect upon the weather conditions and general prosperity (*fong-shui*) of a community. The result was that all the larger places, the administration centres, got their big dominating pagodas. And the smaller places followed suit. In fact, the enthusiasm for pagodas became so great that even individual families round about in the country built them at private expense, and for private benefit. Even at the heart and centre of the official religion, the official residence (*yamen*), one may often find pagodas. It is actually impossible to visualize a Chinese landscape without one of these characteristic buildings in the picture.

Nevertheless, these later times have considerably cooled the enthusiasm. This may be judged from the circumstance that many of the pagodas are in an extremely poor state of preservation.

## BUDDHIST ACTIVITY OUTSIDE THE CLOISTERS

As previously indicated, it is the conviction of the ordinary Chinese that he must have Buddhist monks if his affairs after death are to be taken care of. He may add that they are a "necessary evil", and he may use the opportunity to pour out the vials of his satire and contempt upon the whole business of monkhood. But the result is nevertheless a qualified acknowledgment.

Buddhist monks are often to be seen also in activities connected with the official festivals and fasts. These events may be arranged by the directors of one or more temples, and are then called *Ta tsiao*, or it may be the elders of the city, village, or district who order an official period of worship.

One example of such an arrangement is the *U-nan-hui*, which plays an important rôle in some places. The origin of this festival is to be found in the Ullambana Scripture, which in the third century was translated into Chinese. It tells about the disciple *Mu-lien*, who forced his way into Hades in order to save his mother. Buddha himself then arranged for the release by means of public masses, carried out by the monks. Especially under Amogha in the eighth century these masses grew rapidly. A whole neighbourhood or city "fasts". Meat shops are empty, and huge processions wind through the streets. These are often decorated with red cloth, beautiful lanterns, and various other ornamental things. In the evening, particularly, when the coloured paper lanterns are lighted, the whole scene is very picturesque. Large sums are spent for fireworks, and for paper money to be burned.

This is in a special degree true of the events arranged by the Buddhist monks, with private support, in remembrance of and for the salvation of those who have died among strangers, and who therefore have none to help them with masses for their souls. With much pomp and ceremony public masses are arranged for these lonely ones.

These memorial festivals take on a special form when celebrated for those who have been drowned in rivers (*Kwei-chie*; the spirit festival on the fifteenth of the seventh Moon). In the warm darkness of the summer night small coloured paper boats, each with a lighted candle in it, are launched on the river. In long processions these "light ships" drift with the stream. One who, for example, has been out on the Yangtse River between Wuchang and Hankow on a late summer evening, at the time of the special memorial for the spirits, can never forget the experience.

It is also interesting to see that often as a result of private initiative Buddhist monks are appointed to serve in what are local temples in the most proper sense. These temples belong in the category of the official religion, and get their name from the official rank of the city (*shien, chou, fu*). But Buddhism has managed to slip in there also.

Great festivals are held annually in connection with these temples (*Chen-fan-miao*). As the city takes pride in making of its temple a grand edifice, so there is a special effort to make the festivals brilliant. Competition with neighbouring cities plays in here. In addition, the local merchants use the festivals as occasions to draw trade from the surrounding districts.

The processions occupy an important place. With impressive ceremonial the city god (*Chen-fan-shen*) is carried through the streets, followed by enormous crowds. The élite of the citizenry, headed by the temple Directors, come dressed in their best attire, with high caps on their heads, and with mandarin insignia on their robes (*li-fo*). As "His Highness" passes, the bystanders bow in worshipful reverence. Every home which the procession passes expresses its reverence in the form of sticks of incense set up, or by firecrackers or gunshots.

During the succeeding days less formal processions often come through the streets. Children's processions are common (*kok-sih*): Little children, dressed in the most charming costumes, are bound to wire frames, and carried along through the streets like cherubs, floating through the air.

Inseparably connected with these festivals are the theatrical productions. The temple Directors have in advance, with the permission of the magistrate, secured a theatrical company. This company gives daily presentations for a period extending often to two weeks, with forenoon, afternoon, and evening performances. The crowds stand packed together for hours, listening amid talk and laughter to the hoarse cries from the stage. Historical plays are mostly performed, and the players appear in the most varied costumes, with precise musical accompaniment.

But the main activity of the Buddhist monks outside of the monasteries falls, as before mentioned, at another point. When the exorcists have played their part, and death has reaped his harvest, when fatalistic resignation has cast its stillness over home and survivors<sup>1</sup>—then it is that the Buddhist priests come to chant the masses for the dead (*Tsao-tao-chang*).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the saying with which the Chinese often meet one another at a time like that: "Heaven is the arbiter of birth and death, of riches and greatness" (*Si seng jeu min, fo kwei tsai tien*).



The first step is to "lead the dead into the way" (*Kai-lao*). The next is to help him through the severe test of purification on to the way of eternal life (*Tchao tao*). For this purpose the priests have brought with them various sutras (*Ching*), which, as they are chanted in connection with prayers to *Ti-tsang*, *Kwan-yin*, and *Amitabha*, lead the soul of the departed step by step toward salvation. But to get the proper setting for this process, the main room of the home must be changed into a place of worship. This is done by putting up a temporary altar, by hanging prayer scrolls on the walls, and by lighting large candles.

The work of the priests begins at sundown. There are two, three, five, or more of them, according to the financial circumstances of the family. One chants the mass. He stands before the altar. The others stand near him, holding various musical instruments. In an intensely unvarying monotone the leader intones the long *sutras* and prayers, interludes of music coming at certain intervals. Occasionally the voice falls to a whisper. At such times he bows, or falls upon his face.

The ceremony lasts far into the night. These masses for the dead are often repeated night after night over a considerable period, especially when it is a family of means. But even the poor are here tempted to "live beyond their means", and much of the indebtedness which burdens the average man in China has its origin in these masses for the dead. The monks are to be well paid and to be shown liberal hospitality. In addition there are candles, incense, and masses of paper money and paper objects, etc. This circumstance is the most prolific source of criticism against Buddhism. How often I have heard Chinese say: "According to Buddhist practice only the well-to-do can be saved; the poor have not money enough"!

In the more elaborate burial ceremonies Buddhist priests also have a part, and they perform various ceremonial acts connected with their office.

Otherwise one finds them individually connected with the most varied activities in the Chinese community.

The monks enjoy a large measure of liberty. This again reflects the fact that the Buddhist Church knows of no bureaucratic control. There is no Buddhist pope, and no tie which binds them together; only that the individual abbots and larger monasteries, on account of the veneration in which they are held, exercise a certain directing influence.

But in order to exercise some control in the case of untoward circumstances, or in the case of lawbreaking on the part of monks, the government has found it necessary to demand that

a council of monks shall be set up in each province, to which officials may refer. Such councils have been constituted, corresponding to the common administrative terminology (*shien, chou, fu*, etc.). But from the strictly clerical point of view they have no power. In more recent times "The Buddhist Association" has played quite an important rôle; it arranges lectures, opens book stores, and sees to it that the church is represented at important occasions.

### PILGRIMAGES

Since Buddhism is mainly responsible for the element of pilgrimages in the life of China, we will treat of this interesting development at this time.

As previously mentioned, there were a few out-of-the-many cloisters which became the special object of pilgrimages. These cloisters, which in a financial way became increasingly dependent upon pilgrims, set about making arrangements to gather, house, and serve as many as possible. Advertising placards round about in cities and country districts were used to good purpose. They told what great miracles had been performed, and so on.

And the crowds came. For good pay they found lodging in rooms prepared for the purpose, vegetarian meals in the large dining halls, and also priestly service in the temple hall.

The writer has often been present at large gatherings of pilgrims at sacred places in China. It was particularly impressive to be present at the mass. For there one had the unusual experience of seeing the monks carry out the ceremonial of the mass for a large gathering of people.

The hall was festively decorated. Two long rows of huge lighted candles burned beside the altar. An elderly monk stood in the holy place and intoned the mass, while a whole staff of helpers fell in with chorus and music in the usual way.

Back of them again the host of pilgrims kneeled in long rows. Each had his own method of prayer. However, the pilgrims took part only with genuflections, and the mumbling of *O-mi-to-fo*.

In an adjoining room they are engaged in throwing dice (*Ta kwa*), with two wooden objects, having each a convex and a concave surface. One side represents *Ying* and the other *Yang*, and as these significant surfaces turn up or down one's log of fate for the future is being determined. While one of the monks is assisting with this, another sits at a desk writing fortune-telling slips. These are read off after some mystic wooden sticks have been shaken out of a container.

When one sees the motley life, and the confused picture of Buddhist worship and animistic fortune-telling which is unfolded at such a place, it becomes clear how little it is that separates degenerate Buddhism from the sort of worship which is carried on at the five sacred mountains of China (*Wu yo*).

These five sacred mountains with their temples are really under the jurisdiction of the official religion. But Buddhism, as the most vigorous of China's religions, has also been able to assert itself here. Complete Buddhist service is accordingly to be found in most of these places. The worship is carried out very much as pictured above, with the addition that the genius of the particular mountain is personified in a huge statue.

These are the five sacred mountains of China: (1) *Tai-shan* in Shantung, (2) *Hua-shan* in Shensi, (3) *Heng-shan* in Shansi, (4) *Nan-yo-shan* or *Heng-shan* in Hunan, and (5) *Sung-shan* in Honan.

An enormous number of pilgrims come to these mountains. The power of the particular mountain god seems to be known in a radius which often extends beyond the provincial boundaries. Significant of this is the fact that smaller temples in his honour are built at considerable distances from the mountain itself.

Let us quite briefly describe these pilgrimages (*Hsiang-keh*). In the first place it is to be noted that it is usually special circumstances which impel the individual to go. Sometimes it is sickness; or it may also be unfortunate business conditions, crop failures, or similar things that constitute the motive. Special sins that overshadow a home may also be atoned for by these pilgrimages.

The one concerned, who may be either father, son, or brother in the house, first goes to the nearest temple of the mountain god. There he makes a vow (*Hsü yuen*) that he will go as a pilgrim to the sacred mountain, if the home is helped in this or that difficulty. He may leave at once, without awaiting the result, or he may wait until the help has come (if it does come!). In the latter case the pilgrimage is termed *Huang yuen*—"To pay the vow". A vow may also involve annual pilgrimages over a certain period of years.

There are many things to be observed during the pilgrimage itself. The day (usually in September or October) must be set in consultation with one of the fortune-tellers on the street. A special costume is required: a vest of red or some shade of yellow, with the sign of the mountain god sewed on it. Red signifies that special sins are to be atoned, and that the strictest asceticism is being practised. An incense bowl is carried, with

sticks of smoking incense, and the pilgrim kneels at every third or tenth step.

Together with others in the neighbourhood who are going at the same time, he starts out after first having taken part in a special ceremony of worship. There is no conversation. Eyes are not turned to right or left as they proceed in groups of ten, twenty, fifty, or more. The mind must not be distracted. For upon this depends the result. The silence is broken only when the group leader, in a high falsetto tone, chants a set prayer to the god of the mountain. The others join with him in the second strophe. Only rice and vegetables are eaten, and some take only a little rice gruel and water. After some days of this many of them present a really pinched and ascetic appearance.

Mile upon mile, day after day are passed in this manner. Feet oftentimes become swollen, and weariness and sickness compel a halt. But this is a bad sign. It means that they have not the mind under control! Inns along the way make special efforts to attract guests during the pilgrim season. Festive-looking paper lanterns, with high-sounding inscriptions, are hung. An altar is set up, and prayer rugs are spread; for after the evening meal the pilgrims must attend to their worship.

On my travels during the season of pilgrimage I have often lodged at the same inns as these pilgrims, and it has always made an indelible impression upon me to see these crowds kneeling about the simple altar, and praying in chorus to the mountain god for mercy.

Pilgrims who travel by boat carry their altar with them. A special mark on the sail, or a special flag shows that there are *Hsiang-keh* aboard.

In connection with pilgrimages, as is the case with all worship which is based upon some *special condition of need*, one may frequently make the following observation: If the help is received a great many placards are written or printed, in which the god in question is given extravagant praise. These are put up on city gates, the walls of buildings, and so on. Or, it may be done yet more impressively. The words of acknowledgment may be inscribed upon beautifully painted or carved wooden tablets (*Pien*). These tablets are hung in the temple of the god. Some temples are simply *filled* with such "trophies".



## CHINESE MOHAMMEDANISM

## MOHAMMEDAN IMMIGRATION AND EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

IN a survey of the religions of China there must also be a brief treatment of Mohammedanism. It is true there are not overwhelmingly many adherents of Islam in China, and it has not had anything like the influence of the other religions. It is therefore only in an unessential way that it has a place in the treatment of the general subject. On the other hand, a few of the Chinese Mohammedans have played such an important rôle during the past centuries that we are under obligation to take a look at this religion.

The first question which suggests itself is this: How did Mohammedanism ever come to China? It sounds like fiction to be told of an Arabian immigration into China, but we shall find that the "fiction" is none the less real fact.

According to the most recent researches the facts are as follows: It can be shown that there were trade relations between Arabia and China from the fifth century A.D. and on. The annals of the Tang dynasty (618-907) prove this. Mohammedans in China believe that the Arabs had opened a "factory" in Canton as early as 622; this is very doubtful, however.

But it has been established that the powerful emperor Taitsung received accounts of the victorious course of the Mohammedans through North Africa and Western Asia. Considerable numbers of them, as well as of the Nestorians, were to be found in Chinese Turkestan about A.D. 630. The capital was at that time Changan, recently known as Sian in Shensi.

To this place the Persian king Jezdegerd sent a deputation, seeking assistance in the hopeless struggle against the invading Mohammedans. His son Firuz (Chinese, Pi-lu-su) repeated the request, but the reply was that, Persia being so far away, China could not give military assistance.

In the meantime it seems that the Chinese emperors themselves began to be disquieted by the growing power of the Mohammedans in the West, for we hear shortly afterward of a deputation from the Emperor, whose mission was to present the cause of the Persians at the palace of the Caliph Othman. This Caliph later sent a return deputation to China, and this was received with every mark of distinction in 651.

When the same King Firuz had been completely defeated by the Mohammedans, he again turned to China, where he was received at the capital in the year 671.

From the year 675 there is the further declaration in the historical annals of the Palace to this effect: "A prophet in the West has received power from heaven to conquer all enemies; a special revelation has been given him in a cave; he received a sword and a black stone as a sign."

It was not long before the Chinese also felt the power of the Prophet. The mighty Mohammedan general Kutaiba carried conquest and destruction through Asia. The Chinese sent an army of 200,000 against him, but it was totally defeated.

Then in the year 713 Kutaiba sent a deputation to the imperial palace with costly gifts. Hsuan-tsung, founder of the Han-lin Academy, was then at the helm. The foreign ambassador would not kneel to the emperor. "We kneel only to God in my country," he said. The Mohammedans had at that time subjugated large portions of Central Asia.

No wonder that the Chinese began to fear. But at this critical juncture for China came the death of the Caliph, Walid I, who was Kutaiba's patron. Shortly afterward Kutaiba himself was assassinated, and internal strife also broke out, so the danger of war was past.

Free entrance of foreigners from the West was now permitted, and China received the first major immigration of Mohammedans. But the coming of Arabs in any considerable number occurred later. A Tartar named An Lu-san, a general stationed at the border, rebelled against Emperor Hsuan-tsung and proclaimed himself lord of China. The Emperor handed over the throne to Su-tsung, who, with the help of the Arabs, defeated the Tartars. The 4,000 Arabs who had given him this assistance were now given permission to settle within the borders of the empire. They married Chinese women and were soon completely naturalized. But their religion they kept.

It is a noteworthy fact that the majority of the Mohammedans are still to be found in the north-western provinces. These settlers soon attracted others, and we find Arabs not only in the West, but also about Loyang, and others still around Canton. Many of these latter had come by sea. In conjunction with the Persians they soon made their influence felt in the city.

Official representatives to China often had their return journey cut off by the Thibetans. The annals of the Tang dynasty give the information that such detained nuncios were by the Chinese government given 500,000 ounces of silver for expenses.

Under the Yüan dynasty the ports and provinces of China were legally opened to Arabs and Persians, and an extensive immigration resulted.

From this period occurs the name for Mohammedans which still is the common one in China—*Hui-hui*.<sup>1</sup> Previously the name for them had been *Chin hua*, "The Dark Haired". They themselves call their communion *Chin-chen Chao*, which means "The Community of the Pure and True".

Many of these immigrants were distinguished by great learning, especially in astronomy and mathematics. We therefore find Mohammedans appointed as imperial officials both under Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan.

These immigrant hosts never quite lost their warlike spirit, and so there have been repeated rebellions and bloody episodes. This is particularly true of the provinces of Yünnan and Kansu. In Kansu there is a special division of Mohammedans called Salarians. These seem never to have been able to mix with the Chinese. Accordingly they have never worn queues.

Following a rebellion among them in 1785 a number of severe decrees were issued, affecting all Mohammedans. Pilgrimages to Mecca were forbidden, and also the building of mosques. Their condition became practically that of serfs.

They were under this repressive restraint till 1863. Then there was an uprising of the whole Mohammedan population in North and West China. Millions were killed in the terrible fighting. Peace came only when the adventurous chieftain Yakoob Beg had gained supreme power and formed the famous Mohammedan kingdom up in East Turkestan. Unfortunately he was removed by death as early as 1877. At his death it all crumbled, and after an incredible amount of bloodshed came under the rule of China once more.

The present situation is that partially independent Islamic communities are to be found only in Mongolia and East Turkestan. In the northern and western provinces the followers of Mohammed live like "beasts of prey in a cage", shut in by a series of decrees, designed to make it impossible for them to assert themselves as a people. In the remaining provinces they are numerically so weak that the only possibility is to live a quiet life just like other Chinese citizens. However, in the north-western corner of China revolts are still the order of the day.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this designation, "Turned About" or "Turned Toward", is difficult to explain. Some have thought that it referred to their attitude in prayer—turned toward the west.

## INNER CONDITIONS

It is very difficult to say how many Mohammedans there are in China. Forty millions has been given as a probable figure, and by others twenty millions, or less.

As before mentioned, they are to be found spread over the whole of China, but are more numerous in the northern and western parts, and about Canton. In the city of Canton there are no less than five mosques. This city is regarded as a holy place, on account of the legend that Mohammed's maternal uncle is buried there. His tomb is still shown. The oldest mosque is found in China's ancient capital, Hsi-an. Here is also found the oldest monument, a stone tablet, now split in two, with some remarkable inscriptions about the early history of Mohammedanism in China.

Emperor Chien-lung, of the Manchu dynasty, built a splendid mosque in Peking.

In Nanking the Mohammedans have a theological seminary in addition to their mosques.

Generally speaking, there are schools, large or small, connected with most of the mosques throughout the country. They are primarily for the benefit of the young men who are to be trained as *Mullahs* (Mohammedan priests). To attain the higher rank of *Ahong*, they must go to Nanking, or to Hochow in Kansu, or one of the other institutions of higher learning. Here the Koran is more systematically taught, and the youths learn some Arabic.

It is often quite difficult to find both the Mohammedans and their mosques in the Chinese cities. Their homes are much like those of the other Chinese. Of course idols are totally absent. Two Chinese characters are frequently found over the door, which to the initiated indicate the Mohammedan. These are *Chiao-men* (Member of the Community). They are these characters to legitimize themselves with the authorities, particularly with regard to the butchering of cattle. This is permitted the Mohammedans, who do not eat the flesh of swine, but usually not the other Chinese. Many Mohammedans therefore make their living by selling meat. Occasionally Arabic words are seen over the doors.

The mosques are built in essentially the same style as the temples of China. They usually display three characters: *Tsing Chen Ssi*, meaning, "The Temple of the Pure and True Religion". Only in Kansu and East Turkestan are the pure Arabic forms to be found, with minarets and towers for the calls to prayer.





But upon entering the mosque the difference is very evident. High tablets, with Arabic inscriptions, are seen everywhere. For the services of worship prayer rugs are placed on the floor, and the kneeling worshippers turn "toward Mecca". Most of the service is in Arabic, of which the majority understand next to nothing.

In addition to the regular services of worship, the feasts of the church year play an important rôle. Particularly Ramadan, the season of fasting, is very strictly observed. During that time they eat absolutely nothing during the day, only a little at night.

In many places in China the rite of circumcision is observed by some and not by others; in some places it is unknown.

Chinese Mohammedans are distinguished for their industriousness. There are therefore few poverty-stricken people among them, and these few are well taken care of through the generosity of the others.

Pilgrimages to Mecca are undertaken annually in certain places, especially from Kansu, Yünnan, and Canton. Elsewhere they are unheard of. There is boundless honour and merit for one who has made such a pilgrimage, and it carries with it a special title of honour—*Haji*.

It is interesting to note that Turkish and Arabic emissaries are to be found at intervals in China upon tours of inspection. These gentlemen are not very gracious when they find laxness and departures from the pure doctrine and conduct of life. And there is naturally much of this in China, cut off from the Mohammedan world as the community in China has been through long periods.

In this connection it may be mentioned that two tendencies have developed: a conservative, with strict adherence to the traditions (*Lao Chiao*); and a liberal, which in many things adapts itself to its environment (*Sin Chiao*). The tension between the two has often been strong, to the point of violence, which again has led to the Government intervening by force. Some of the rebellions must be viewed against this background.

Among outstanding Mohammedan writers in China must be mentioned Liu Chih. He has written a number of books about Islam: *The Compass of Islam* (*Chin-chen tche-lan*), *Life of Mohammed*, *Ceremonial Laws of Islam*, etc.

Mohammedanism in China is not very zealous in propaganda, wherefore there is no noticeable expansion. It confines itself to the old immigrant groups, and so exerts very little influence upon the present speedy development in China.

## THE MOHAMMEDAN CATECHISM IN CHINA

In the Chinese Mohammedan schools for children the famous little catechism, *Tien Fang San Tze-ching* (*The Arabic Mohammedan Trimetrical Classic*), is widely used as a book of instruction. In a masterly way it has the great elemental truths moulded into the three-character meter. Following are some examples of its content:

Before heaven and earth—before all things—was the most high one—he whose name is The True Lord—he who rules the heavens—and governs the universe—he who divides *Ying* and *Yang*—who carries forward the development in heaven and earth—brings forth the grass and the trees—determines joy and sorrow—gives the sun and the moon their light—protects bird and beast—and makes fishes and sea animals to leap for joy.

After he had finished all things—he created man—supplied him with wisdom—and filled him with a soul.—Therefore man is the centre of existence.

He sent the holy ones down to proclaim the doctrine—teaching mankind—unfolding the great truths.

Only when the great doctrine is understood—can one be called human.—If the great doctrine is misunderstood—man is no better than the beasts.

You little children—just beginning to comprehend—that which is simply presented—not able to master the deeper things—remember that you must be obedient—to parents and teachers.

Learn you must right conduct—toward the older and the younger—learn to distinguish the higher and the lower—know the principle of goodness and temperance—learn to emphasize good habits and ceremonies—be careful in word and deed.

What you have learned—you must tell others—if it is difficult to explain—you must find a method.

The fountain of truth—is with The True Lord.—Truth has not come to be—as if made by man.

The first principle of truth—is to learn the statements about truth.

Be anxiously careful in the morning—review the day in the evening.

Things are not God—there is only one God—and Mohammed is his prophet.

Every soul that would learn the truth—reads the holy book

(the Koran)—unites his heart about the holy commandments—for a clear and complete understanding.

Everything has its own character—the nature of the Koran—is good tidings from the West.

Only when the doctrine shines forth—do you understand the truth.—When the doctrine is hidden—when the doctrine is misunderstood—you are on the way of error.

The truth brings joy—heresy creates strife.

To escape from the world of dust—there must be prayers—five times a day.—There must be fasting one month in the year—in order to subdue all desire and lust.—Riches are to be shared with others.—One must walk through life as a just person.

Make your way early to the mosque—if you would try your mind and control it.

That has been the way of the saints—it is the way for the common man—it is the way of the wise—it must be so for the unlearned.—Difficult are these five great rules.

At the age of seven the beginning must be made—if the child shall attain to true knowledge—and learn his duty toward parents and teachers.

When the boy reaches his fifteenth year—he must enter upon responsibility—and work forward in his vocation—without dropping out of the race.

God has given commandments—which must be imprinted deeply upon the heart.

If you follow them—you are rewarded—if you transgress them—punishment follows.

In the very centre is the commandment concerning worship—and as the corner-stone for all your activity—stands the commandment to walk in the right way.

Thereby you have the key to heaven—and thereby the fires of hell are quenched—there you find the fountain that cleanses from sin—and the lamp that burns over your grave.

Hear the six rules for worship: Wash yourself with pure water—put on clean garments—stand on clean ground—rest at the right time—quiet the heart—turn toward the West.

First comes praise to God—as you stand in upright position.—So the teachings of the saints are sung.

When prostrating yourself—keep the back straight—and strike your forehead upon the ground.—The worship is closed in a kneeling position.

It is therefore an indubitable fact that, in the midst of all the laxity and moral degradation which characterize Chinese Mohammedanism, one may also find evidence of a fine solicitude and a holy enthusiasm for the good of the growing generation.

Nor does it require any very superior understanding or depth of psychological insight to note the higher standard of conduct and more elevated view of life which are, in considerable part at least, characteristic of the adherents of Islam, in comparison with the rest of their countrymen.

This is no more than might be expected of those who, in spite of their many aberrations, have so many gleams of truth in their faith, a community which has also received something of the heritage of Christianity.

#### EFFORTS TO KEEP THE FAITH PURE

A close examination of Chinese Mohammedan rites and thought development will reveal the fact, that in these Eastern areas also we find a fairly pure form of Mohammedanism. At the same time it will be shown that the more spiritual form, known from Persian Suphism, has made itself felt here and there.

There are also indications that Confucian thought, and the typical Chinese world view, have had their influence upon the system.

In a remarkable way the finer spiritual aspects combine with a ritual which has hardened into external formalism, which loses itself in the most hair-splitting and often quite childish decrees.

Under the pressure of time, and the competitive grind of everyday living, the dividing lines often disappear, and especially the younger generations tend to slide off into godless worldliness.

Individual Mohammedans in China, of outstanding piety, now and then make an effort to stem this tide, by publishing popular writings, such as catechisms, revival literature, and articles seeking to arouse the zeal of Islam's adherents for the faith of the fathers.

These revival writings, by lonely, often deeply religious Mohammedans, have in their way a moving quality. Since Christian missionaries in China have of late begun a more definite and systematic work among the Mohammedans, some of the most typical of these writings have been translated. It



was my privilege, together with the able missionary F. J. Cotter, to undertake some of these translations.

Some of the more significant passages from these translations are herewith reproduced, for they serve better than long essays to throw light upon both the strength and the weakness of the spiritual characteristics of Chinese Mohammedans. The following quotations are taken from the book *An Epitome of the Chief Articles of Mohammedan Doctrine*, written in 1678 by the literateur *Ma-Chong-chin*.

*From the Introduction:* Our faith has been handed down to us here in China through a period of 1,100 years. The spoken and written language, as well as customs of all kinds, have undergone great changes in that time. The main reason for this is that during the whole period there has not been among us any prophet who could unfold for us the sacred writings. There has been no authoritative rule about the reading of books, and no one to keep us from confusing thought.

In this explanation we have used the Chinese language throughout.<sup>1</sup> By reading this book it will now be possible to receive a full explanation of the rules: what one may eat and drink, how to conduct oneself, when to stand and when to kneel, etc. If a person will carefully note what is written here, he will be able to live his life in the right way.

There was a time when books might be seen in the home of every Mohammedan. But then came the troublous times. Bandits destroyed the sacred books, persecuted the faithful, and the expansion of Islam was stopped. The great classics and the revered collections of sacred writings were burned. Later, when brighter times came there was not a sign left of the writings of Islam. [This refers to the times of the great rebellions and persecutions.] There was therefore nothing to do but begin to publish books anew.

Here I sit sighing and wondering that I should have the courage to write about these lofty matters.—We Mohammedans should of course know the books in the original language. For even though we have some knowledge of Chinese style, yet we feel that we can with brush and ink give but a poor presentation of the doctrine, for it is deep as the sea.

For this reason I am very loth to undertake the explanation of the content of these books, yet I cannot do otherwise.

<sup>1</sup> Here it must be remarked that the Koran has not been fully translated into Chinese. Chinese Mohammedans have therefore only fragments of the sacred text for their use if they are unable to read Arabic.

My father had a burning desire to understand the doctrine, and sought sincerely to follow the truth. As he began to carry out the religious exercises he suffered from the mistake of emphasizing the less important at the expense of the essentials—just because he had not received sufficient enlightenment.

How can I then, his son, well aware of these things, sit here in inactivity?—There is no other way than to finish this old manuscript, so that my father can have a proper book.

Meanwhile, as others see the finished manuscript they say: Why not print it? What is true of your father is equally true of many among us.

#### THANKSGIVING

I will begin with the teaching about Him who is the all-encompassing merciful one in time, and whose loving kindness alone is throughout all the eternities—of Him with the revered and lofty name: The True Lord. Glory be to Him, the Lord, who upholds and protects the whole earth, He who guides all those who sincerely seek that which is right!

May grace, mercy, and peace from the True Lord be with His great apostle Mohammed, and with all those who follow him!

The saints of earlier times have ordained that all shall observe the five stated times for the daily worship, keep the heavenly commandments, and live according to the twelve regulations.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE VARIOUS SECTS IN CHINA

BEFORE closing this treatment of *Religions in China*, we must also mention quite briefly the sects. These have played a rather important rôle in China through many centuries.

Their origins are usually in Taoism or Buddhism. So they have naturally had to share the fate of the mother religions in the matter of persecutions. But even beyond this they have been the special object of the Government's fury because of their secret character. While the two above-mentioned religions might at times be favoured, or at least tolerated, the secret sects have always been under the ban of disapproval. With untiring zeal the authorities have continued to issue edicts against them, and they have made use of the most exquisite tortures when they have managed to lay hold of reputed adherents.

A horrible picture of intolerance and cruelty is unveiled in the thorough-going study of Dr. J. J. M. de Groot, in his book, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China*. This study is the first to throw light upon this dark field.

The common designation of the Chinese for these sects is *Hsie-chiao*—i.e., societies that depend upon evil powers. Their secret character is emphasized in the expression *Pi-mi-hui*—secret societies.

Of the majority of secret societies in China it may be said that they have a religious cast. They seek their strength in the worship of certain divinities, or the observance of special rules and customs. This power so obtained is often thought to be supernatural, and so the members of the sects may sometimes be seen undertaking superhuman tasks.

Not a few among these sectarians are good people, with high ideals and the urge for reform. But hidden among them are also some of society's worst elements.

All those who come under the general designation of Vegetarians (*Chi-Tsai-ti*) must be regarded as being in a peculiar way transitional to the sects. These quite various folks, who are only loosely connected with the Taoist or Buddhist communities, have formed among themselves a number of organizations. They distinguish the following divisions: (1) *Ta-cheng-men*, (2) *Kwei-ken-men*, (3) *Chin-tan-men*, (4) *Tung-kwa-tang*,

(5) *Hsi-hwa-tang*. The first two are of Buddhist origin; the others are closer to Taoism. In some places they are open about it, to the extent of acquiring a little temple, where they, along with their vegetarianism, read the sacred scriptures (*nien ching*). From these little temples with the low, open towers, may be heard the dull sound of the "Wooden Fish" early and late. Or they may read the "Scriptures" separately in their own homes, and come together for occasional secret conferences.

Upon closer examination these writings are found to consist of fantastic combinations of ancient Chinese philosophies with later Taoist works, very often with easily recognizable Buddhist ideas also added.

It is most often old men (*Tsai-kong*) and old women (*Tsai-poh*) who are the most zealous vegetarians.

Up to this point is it relatively easy to follow the movement, and obtain some conception of it.

But when one seeks to penetrate more deeply into the matter, and to study the individual secret societies, it becomes far more difficult. One does not proceed far before being brought to a standstill. The ablest and most objective students admit that the amount of certain knowledge obtained is almost inconsequential. Nevertheless, those who attempt such studies have a common feeling that they are walking upon a thin crust of earth: there is a hollow sound from underneath, on account of the many subterranean passages.

Some names are available, and some significant information. Most of this is to be found in the Chinese *yamens*, where by means of the most horrible tortures it has been forced out of members that have been arrested. Otherwise Dr. Edkins and Dr. Groot have made the most noteworthy contributions.

1. One of the oldest of these organizations mentioned in the imperial edicts and judicial proceedings is *Peh-lien-chiao* ("White Lotus Society"). The name is familiar all over China, for this society has in the course of time had members everywhere, and has at intervals demonstrated its power in various ways. The name was purposely adopted from the famous old Buddhist school, "The School of the White Lotus". This then became suspect, and had to change its name—(*Tsing-tu*) "The Pure Land School".

It is significant that the patron divinity chosen is *Maitreya*, the Buddhist god of the future. The main purpose was, by mutual assistance (cf. the use of the term "Brotherhood") to reach the land of bliss. The first members of the sect settled in Lu-shan (Lu Mountains), near the Po-yang Lake.



Beginning with the practice of asceticism, it seems that the movement has later more gone over into the struggle of practical affairs, for *Peh-lien-chiao* appears periodically in connection with rebellions. This has in a special degree brought down the wrath of the Government upon it to this day.

2. *Ming-tseng-chiao*. No facts are here available. The same is true of the two mysterious organizations:

3. *Peh-yang-chiao*, and

4. *Hong-yang-chiao*, both of which, as mentioned above, base their existence upon the ancient Chinese philosophical system.

5. *Pa-kwa-chiao* is widely current in Central China, particularly in the province of Honan. Fortune telling and divination have a prominent place in this society. The sect is in some localities called *Kiu-kong-chiao*.

Those of purely Buddhist origin are the following:

6. The *Mahayana* sect (*Ta Cheng-chiao*).

7. *Shan-yiu-chiao* ("Society of Good Friends").

8. *Hshien-tien-chiao* is much more widely known. The name means, literally, "To be (or go) before Heaven". By this is meant, to have attained such harmony with the laws of Heaven (*Tao*), as to arrange one's life *in advance* according to these laws, without having to be forced thereto by the laws of nature (*Heo tien*). This profound expression signifies furthermore the clear and liberated spiritual position which is not dimmed and hidden by the deceitfulness of this earthly existence. In its common present-day use *Hsien tien* means supernatural and *Heo tien* natural.

In this numerous society we find the ancient Chinese philosophical system in its entirety, with the addition of radical Taoist and Buddhist explanations. It is stated that Lo Hwai, the founder of the society, after having attained to Nirvana, at the special request of *Wu-chi* (here personified as "The Eternal"), freely chose in obedience and love to come down to the many (ninety-two billions—or milliards), to "lead them back home".

Lo Hwai permitted himself to be born in the little town of Teng-siang, near Tsih-mih in the province of Shantung. His father, Lo Wan-lung, died when he was seven, and his mother when he was thirteen. For a time he was a soldier at Peking. Then he received permission to go to the Kin-kuh monastery, where he received instruction. After some time he came to Nanking, where he received ordination as a Buddhist monk. Later he moved back to Peking, and there he wrote a book about the three religions (*Six Books in Five Parts* was the title).

In this book he seeks to prove that "all three religions have one underlying meaning".

As Lo Hwai gained recognition the jealousy of the Confucianists was aroused, with the result that he was thrown into prison. After a considerable period of suffering he won his freedom, by demonstrating his spiritual superiority, in a discussion with the monk Shiao-yin, who had come from Thibet. Lo Hwai was the only one in Peking who could bring him to silence.

After gaining his freedom Lo Hwai laboured for many years, by spoken and written word, to promote his syncretistic views. The sect which takes its origin from him has followed him in constantly advocating the widest tolerance (*Hsien-tien-chiao*). There is no one special method of salvation. The ways are many and various. They all meet at the one point: to approach as close to the natural laws as possible.

The mystery of existence is explained by the three extremes (*San chih*): *Wu-chih*, *Tai-chih*, and *Fang-chih*, around which all existence moves. There are likewise three great values (*San Pao*): *Buddhas* (*Fo*), *Dharma* (*Fa*), and *Sangha* (*Seng*).

The worship of these precious things is not conducted in temples, but in the homes. Pictures and images are not used. The worship is conducted before a little altar, upon which a lamp or lighted candle has been placed. An offering of incense is brought, and on certain occasions fruit, but never meat. The leaders are called simply *Sien-seng* (the common term in China for teachers), and the members address one another as "brother" and "sister".

A great deal of interest in Christianity is found among the members of this society. As might be expected, Jesus Christ is often identified with their great prophet Lo Hwai. It must be acknowledged that this division of the vegetarians is on a fairly high level, both of ideals and of conduct.

The Sien-tien Society had its flowering period during the Ming dynasty. But at that time also the worst persecutions occurred. However, there are still many adherents throughout China.

#### 9. *The Lung-hwa Sect.*

This also claims to have been founded by the remarkable prophet figure which we have just discussed, Lo Hwai. However, it can be proved that the name of the organisation, *Lung-hwa*, has a much earlier origin. There seems to be considerable connection between the *Lung-hwa* sect ("Dragon Flower Sect") and the "White Lotus Society". The Messiah of Buddhism, Maitreya, plays a notable rôle in both.

A richly developed ceremonial is characteristic of the *Lung-hwa*



*hwa* Society, with god images and a priesthood, festivals, and prescribed acts of worship. Membership in this society is therefore much greater than in *Hsien-tien-chiao* with its more aristocratic tendencies.

In its extensive pantheon "The Three Eternal Ones", already noticed in connection with the *Hsien-tien* sect, are in the forefront. These are often presented in water-colours on large scrolls, as three old men holding the eight categories of fate in their hands. A number of familiar Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist divinities are found. In addition there is a special, though rather minor heaven god (*Tien-kong*), and an earth goddess (*Hau-tu*).

Since the society has to escape publicity as much as possible, the halls of worship are usually arranged in private houses (where the host is a member). These halls are commonly called *Tsai-tang* ("Vegetarian Hall"), and the members *Tsai-yu* ("Vegetarian Friends").

There are many gradations in the great "Brotherhood", from the highest priest (*Kong-kong*), with his two assistants (*Tai-kong* and *Tsing-shü*), down to the clerks (*Shu-chi*), the leaders (*Ta-gien* and *Shiao-gien*), and the "Three Groups of Instrumentalities" (*San-sin*). The priest and his assistants are forbidden to marry. It is interesting to note that the priest is often a Buddhist monk. On occasions of special importance he may be seen in full Buddhist vestments, but with the hair grown out upon his head.

Women enjoy the same rights and possibilities of advancement as the men, for the leading principle of the society is fully to practise *Mahayana* (the great way of salvation).

Hence the members are zealous in proselytising. Such zeal is rewarded by more rapid advancement.

Acceptance into membership of the society comes only after careful investigation, for evil elements might betray it. A guarantor is therefore required (*Gien-tsin-si*), who can bear witness to the sincerity of the applicant.

During the initiation, as throughout the entire worship, *Kwanyin* plays the most important rôle.

#### 10. *Chin-tan-chiao*, or *Golden Pill Sect*.

This is beyond doubt one of the most interesting of the secret societies in China, for here we note that the religious element is dominant. Naturally this powerful sect has also been obliged, in the times of persecution and trial, to take up social and economic matters upon its programme—under Chinese social conditions anything else would have been impossible—but the fact remains that the purely religious concern has been the essential one.

There is a special reason for this. In the first place, the founder was an unusually deep personality, who drank deep at the religious fountains. He was Lü-Yuen, also known under the name Shun Yang-tse, a famous litterateur of his time. He was born in North China 755 A.D., and spent his youth and early manhood near the places where Mohammedanism and the Nestorian Church first flourished. That he really came in contact with the Christians is clearly evident from the circumstance, that he is mentioned in the text of the Nestorian tablet, as the calligrapher and scholar who assisted the priest Adam (*Ching-ching*) in formulating the immortal eulogy of the Nestorian tablet. For according to the latest researches it is reasonably certain that the Lü Hsiu-yuen who is mentioned in the inscription is identical with Lü-yuen, the famous Taoist (cf. Professor Saeki's *The Nestorian Monument in China*). As often happens in China, an extra character, "Hsiu", has been added to his name.

Otherwise we know of Lü-yuen that in 770 he held a high official position in the province of Kiangsi. During the whole course of his life he stressed religious studies. Like most of the serious thinkers of his time, he was a Taoist. But it is quite clear in his case that the vulgar Taoism, with its transmutation of metals and elixirs of life, was brought up into higher planes of thought.

Finally he organized a religious school, which later in times of stress became a secret society. The mark of its connection with Taoism is left upon the name by which the society became known, *Chin-tan-chiao* (Golden Pill sect).

The society's teachings and cultus show unquestionable signs of Christian and Buddhist influence. Even today it is possible to find much in their sacred writings and inner arrangements which points in that direction, and that in spite of modifications through hundreds of years.

It was in collaboration with General Kwo Tze-yi that Lü-yuen in the city of Fenyang laid the foundation for the new religious community, which has had so great an influence in North and Central China down to our day. He started with the old Chinese thought of the two world forces, *Yang* and *Yin*, and developed it—as he thought—under the special inspiration of "The Eight Holy Ones" (*Pa Hsien*).

In this connection there appear some quite remarkable terms for spirit rulers, that place religious people permanently in touch with the eternal world. In certain passages there are suggestions that these terms are gathered up in a certain one.

Here are some names: "The Warning Bell That Is Not



Dependent Upon External Force"; "The Little Word" (*Logos*); "The King Among the Sons of God". But the last expression seems to have made the deepest impression of all. It is this: "*The Doctrine from Above*" (*Yuen-fang Sien-sen*). Time after time we meet this phrase in the writings of the "Golden Pill sect". It carries a dim allusion to the great Master, who has unfolded the deep meaning of life—Christ Jesus.

Another reason for believing that there really has been Christian influence is afforded by the fact that during periods of persecution the Nestorian Church partly seems to have merged with *Chin-tan-chiao*. No doubt Nestorianism had by that time considerably degenerated. But it would nevertheless carry with it valuable thoughts from the eternal truth-content of the Christian faith, and these thoughts have remained as gleaming nuggets among the confused writings and rituals of the Golden Pill sect, clear down to our own day.

An interesting piece of research in this very field is just being carried out. The fragments of the literature of the Golden Pill sect which the present writer has seen have given him the definite impression that we are on the right track. What makes the work of research especially difficult is the secrecy of the sect which the present writer has seen have given him the fact is that most of the sect's adherents have a very vague conception of the society's fundamental scriptures. It is of interest also to note that a number of the best Christians in North China and Manchuria have come from *Chin-tan-chiao*.

The adherents are estimated to number approximately ten millions.

II. Finally we would make some brief mention of some of the more distinctively political, social, and economic organizations having a religious basis. In the first rank of these would come the famous *Tai-ping-chiao*, which played such an immeasurably important rôle in China's political life about the middle of last century. As the Taipings came to be so historically prominent, we would here refer for fuller particulars to historical treatises.

12. Much feared for its secrecy is the powerful organization, *Ko-lao-hui* ("The Elder Brothers Society"). This society has ramifications all over China, and members from all classes of people, not least among the soldiers. Outright criminal elements are often found among the adherents. What makes the society specially feared is the way in which it secretly metes out justice. I have myself seen a number of victims of its secret action.—Its meetings are more like club gatherings than religious

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meetings. It is also entirely outside of the camp of the vegetarians. But the organization does offer its members considerable economic and social security. It is therefore natural that, under the difficult social conditions in China, many would enter the society on that account.

13. Of the same sort, but still more aggressive and predatory in character, is the "Red Lantern Society" (*Hong Teng Hui*). It appears in troublous times, and carries on in its districts with terrorism and extortion in a manner that is often revolting.

There is a special class of secret societies which have as their object the attainment of supernatural powers. One such power which is specially sought after is the ability to fell the opponent without danger to oneself. Others are, invulnerability in the face of firearms, the ability to disappear suddenly and reappear at some distant place, etc.

In Central China all this has been combined under the concept *Hsioh Shen Ta* (Learning from the Gods How to Strike). The idea is that through zealous practice of certain ceremonies of worship before the images of certain gods one is laid hold upon (*Fo-djoh*) by the power of the god, so as to become unconquerable. Certain magical formulas are repeated endlessly, while beating time with a fan or a sword. The tempo is steadily increased, and the words are spoken with rising force, until it becomes a loud, inarticulate cry. The devotee soon attains complete ecstasy, his strength is multiplied and his courage is unlimited; the god has taken possession of him. I have seen cases where complete insanity has been the result. A young man once came to me who during that kind of exercise had, during the moment of irresponsibility, swallowed a lot of copper coins. Now he came to get help, for "he felt a weight in his stomach".

Best known among these "god-taught fighters" are the so-called "Boxers", who were given passing mention in Chapter I. The general name of the Boxers is *Tuen-hui* ("Society of Fists"). Their official name is *I-ho-tuen* ("The Society of Righteousness and Harmony"). There are various divisions, such as *Chang-tao-hui* and *Tuan-tao-hui* (Long and Short Knives Societies).

It seems that the real home of the Boxers is the province of Shantung. There the above-mentioned exercises were carried on in great style toward the close of last century, and the movement spread from there to most of the provinces. It is common knowledge how the Empress Dowager, together with some of her ministers, came to believe the tales about the "invulnerability" and "supernatural powers" of the Boxers, and was thereby led to make the insane attack upon foreigners and

upon native Christians in China in the year 1900. Concerning the whole course of the Boxer uprising, we refer to secular history.

The many other political societies have also more or less of a religious basis. This was, at least in some degree, the case with the more recent famous society, *Ming-hui* ("The Society of the Holy Vow"), which was organized by modern, idealistic Chinese students in Japan in 1905. Here the programme was adopted which was realized in such a surprising way in 1911-12, the great revolution which was to bring in the new China.

Since the establishment of the Republic, a number of eclectic societies have flourished, especially *Tao Yuan*. Its social service department, the Red Swastika Society, has done notable famine and war relief work.

Those who have followed this treatment of the subject, "Religions of China", must have received some impression of the high degree of interrelationship existing among the various religious systems of China. Especially do the freer societies, which we have called "the sects", in a remarkable way reflect the whole religious milieu of China.

They will also be in better position to understand the paradoxical statement that the Chinese are at the same time Confucianists, Taoists, and Buddhists. This condition is given visible expression, not only in the circumstance that some of the divinities are to be found in all the religious systems, but also by the fact that in some of the smaller localities there are common temples, where the respective god images of the three religions are enthroned in full harmony.

While the daily worship is connected with the ancestral tablets of the home, the average Chinese likes to visit some temple on special occasions, and whether they are Taoist or Buddhist makes no great difference.

In connection with his occupation he has also to fulfil certain special obligations. If he is a scholar he must in conjunction with his scholar friends pay his respects to Wenchang and Confucius. If he is an artisan he must at certain times show his loyalty to the patron god of his craft (e.g., to the great god of carpenters, called *Lo-pan*).

If you press him, and question him more particularly about his philosophy of life as a whole, you are apt to hear many curious things—most often a loosely articulated system of thought, in which the old Chinese outlook, shaped according to Confucian pattern, has been loosely combined with a Buddhist philosophy of existence.



In fact, you meet a very large number who have simply made no attempt to bring the various systems into harmony, people in whom the capacity for reflection as well as religious piety has received very little development. It is therefore the more encouraging to meet those, not so few in number, who have entered with deep earnestness into a broader study of religion.

As we all realize, China, ever since the revolution of 1911, has been thrown into the melting pot as never before—torn as she has been by civil warfare and internal strife, ravaged by the God-forsaken imperialism of Western powers, and her very life threatened by a powerful military nation in the Orient.

No wonder, then, that the most varied sorts of influences make themselves felt in that tremendous mass of people, including religious influences.

There has been an evident religious awakening following a temporary decline. Monasteries and temples have been restored and enlarged, and old sacred places have again come into prominence. Masses of people have been making their way to places of pilgrimage, and there has been a larger number of novices in Buddhist monasteries than in a long time. Many of the military class who have witnessed the depredations of fire and sword until they were sick at heart have sought the great stillness of the monasteries.

Even among the *literati* there has been some kindling of religious fervour. This is to be seen in the "Reformed Confucianism" which has been mentioned, but has been even more noticeable in the tendency toward the most modern form of *Mahayana* Buddhism, the Pure Land School (*Tsing-tu*). One may frequently meet teachers and officials who for a longer or shorter time have retired to the quiet of the cloister, and there in seclusion practise the worship of the All-Father Buddha, *Amitabha*. Many of the *literati* devote themselves to a study of the highly developed philosophy of Buddhism called *Wei shih*, the school of idealism.

During these times many have also found their way into the Christian Church, which has been irresistibly going ahead as never before in China. With its richly diversified work, and its powerful missionary organization, it is exercising an influence upon the development of the new China out of all proportion to the statistics of adherents. It is a spiritual power in China which attracts the best elements in the great body of the nation. And not only so. Christianity has more than any other influence served to liberate the best in China's tradition and sacred heritage, and made it available for the struggle of life. To this must

be added the fact that the life and control of the Church are being increasingly organized according to the characteristics of nation and people, and this gives the assurance that a real Chinese Christian Church will emerge, and not just a Western transplant which stands or falls with Western care and control.

But there have also been opposite tendencies. A strong anti-religious movement came up, caused partly by the deep disappointment with the settlement following the first World War, and partly under the influence of many new impulses coming from a Europe and America suffering from a war psychosis.

The most prominent element here was the Renaissance or "New Thought" movement. It started as an idealistic and praiseworthy attempt to find and face reality under all conditions, but it resulted partly in a cold and cynical rationalism, which not only destroyed the scum of unreality, but also tended to put out some lights of a more real sort. Yet there is no doubt that this intellectual movement also has had an important mission, in helping to lead the people of the Orient out of the darkness of superstition and ignorance. As regards Christianity one need have no fear, for faithfulness to reality is one of its basic elements.

A very great deal of what China has cherished in its religious life through millenniums must fall, for it cannot stand in the presence of truth. But the Chinese have also gained much of enduring worth, true and genuine values, both material and spiritual. May it be possible for them in this difficult period of reorientation and reorganization to preserve its precious heritage, in such a way that with its own sacred peculiarity of character it may take its place in the great Kingdom of God on earth, and contribute of its best to the entire human family.

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